

GIANT FULL-COLOR PINUP OF HULK HOGAN

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PRO

Wrestling

ILLUSTRATED

T.V.
SPORTS

IS BRUNO SAMMARTINO
BOB BACKLUND'S
BODYGUARD?



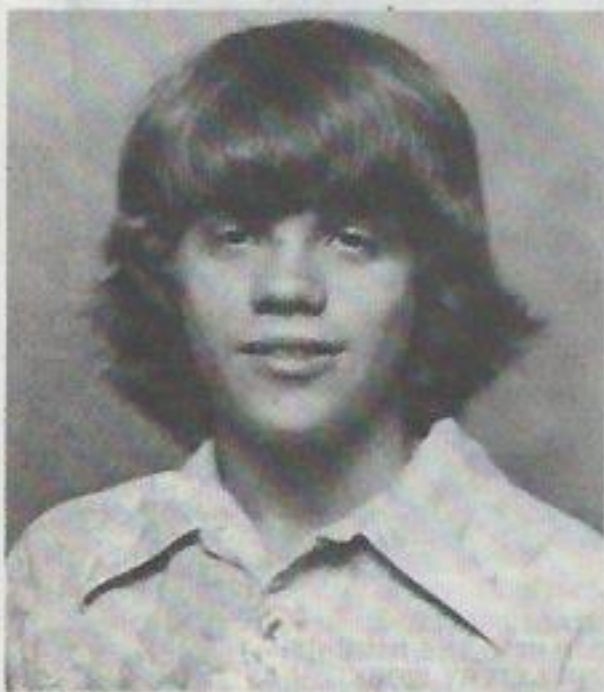
THE MAN WHO
PREVENTS DUSTY
RHODES FROM
BECOMING CHAMPION



Exclusive Peak-Action Photos:
THE BRISCOES'
WAR WITH THE
FREEBIRDS

KING'S COURT

By Peter King



THE WINNING ENTRY— "What Mil Mascaras Stands For"

Mil Mascaras stands for achievement. I look at Mascaras and see the greatness that hard work and determination can lead to. Mascaras is someone everyone can respect and look up to. What better way to teach young children the difference between right and wrong than through professional wrestling? Mil Mascaras is an important part of this. More importantly, he attracts the wrestlers of the future, such as myself, to the scientific side of wrestling. To sum everything up, the name Mil Mascaras is synonymous with everything good and decent in life, as well as in wrestling.

—Randy Mixon
Columbus, Georgia

LETTERS, ENTRY BLANKS, and envelopes were scattered about the desk and floor. Mil Mascaras opened another envelope, pulled out the composition, leaned back in the swivel chair, and began to read. We had watched him repeat this ritual for more than three days.

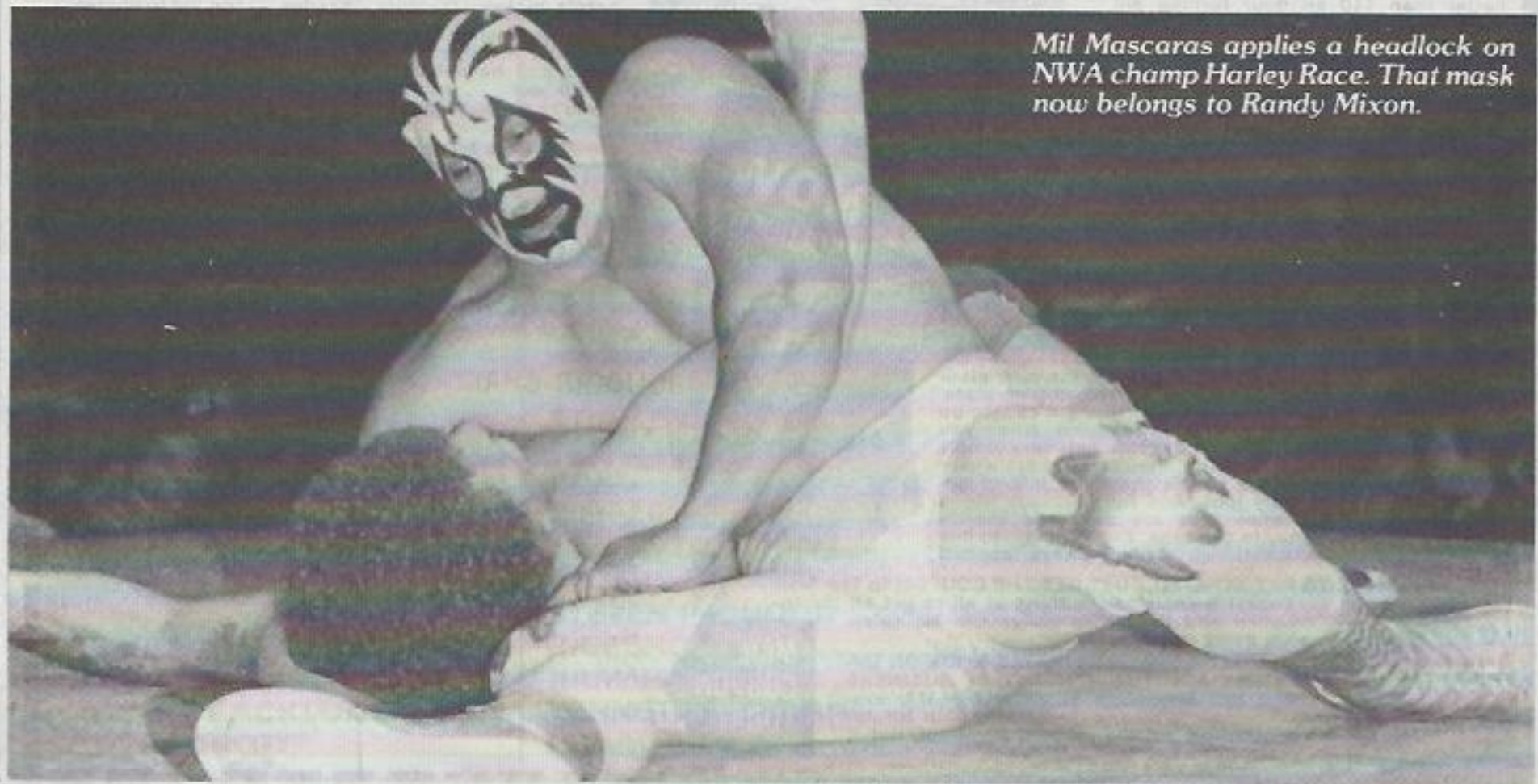
Suddenly, Mil sat up straight in his chair. "I think we may have a winner," he announced. "Now, all I have to do is read the rest of the entries. I must be fair, you know."

A few hours later, Mil had finished. "This is the winner," Mil stated, holding up the composition he had liked so much. Editors, secretaries, and janitors gathered around Mil's makeshift desk. We all read the composition. And we all agreed it was wonderful.

The winner of this year's "Win A Mil Mascaras Mask Contest" is 14-year-old Randy Mixon of Columbus, Georgia. His winning composition is reprinted in the box on this page.

"What touched me about Randy's composition," Mil told us, "is his thought about the difference between right and wrong. That has been an important part of my career. In a sport where you can get ahead faster by cheating, it is

(Continued on page 50)



Mil Mascaras applies a headlock on NWA champ Harley Race. That mask now belongs to Randy Mixon.

RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter

WAS KEN PATERA the victim of a conspiracy? That's what he claims. After losing the Missouri state title to Ted DiBiase and the Inter-Continental title to Pedro Morales, Patera swears there is a plot against him. "It's a very logical deduction," Patera told me. "First DiBiase paid off a referee to count my shoulders down. Then he called his buddy

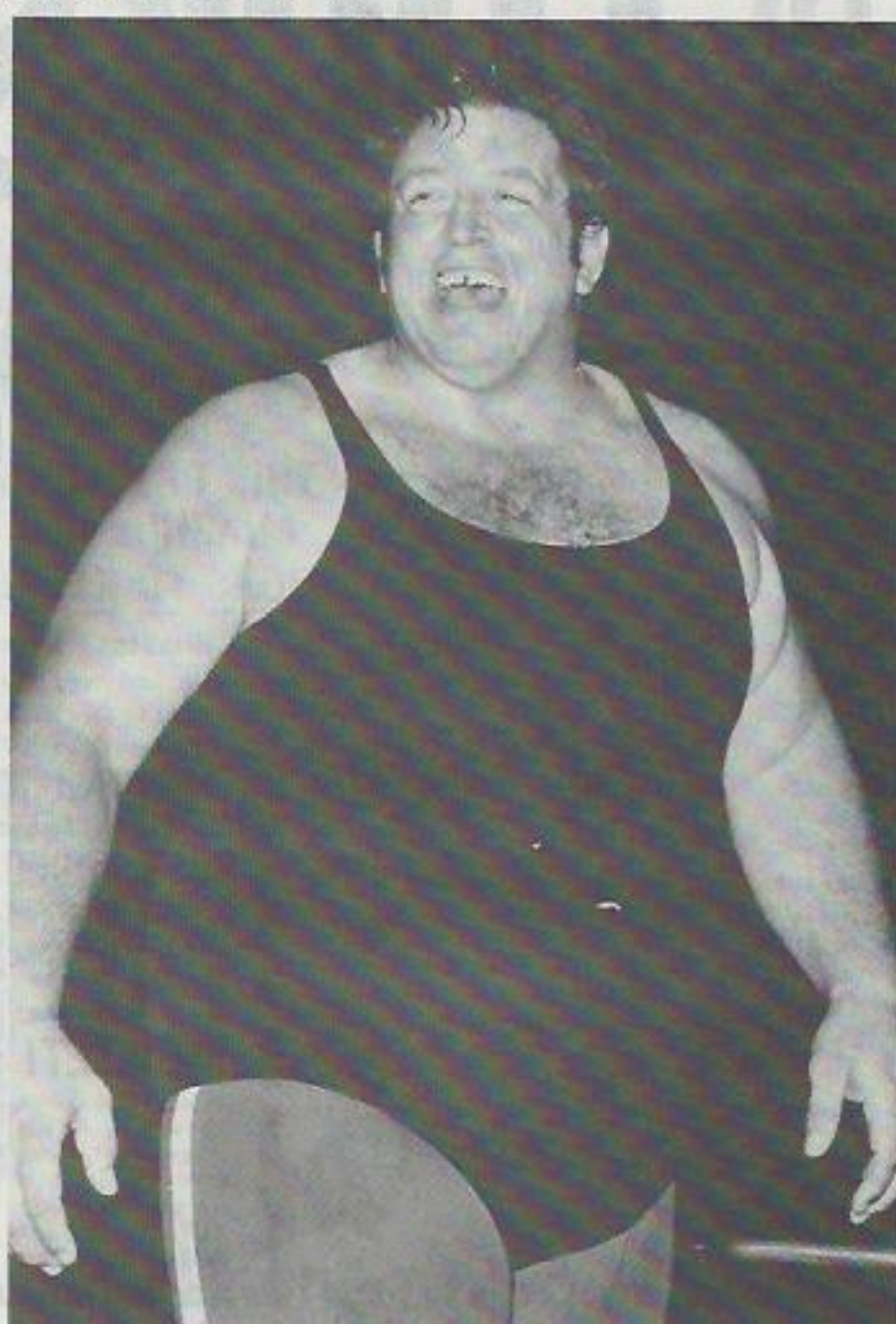
Morales and suggested he buy off a referee, too. They really pulled it off. I guess anything is easy when you have a lot of money behind you."

The Florida tag team championship has changed hands. Barry Windham and Scott McGhee have lost the state belts to Lord Al Hays' vicious duo of Bobby Jagers and his cousin, R.T. Tyler.

It's official. After over two decades in the sport, gargantuan Gorilla Monsoon has decided to retire. "I love the sport very much," said Monsoon at a press conference. "It has been very good to me, but after 21 years, I think it's time to pack it in. I will still be active in wrestling in some ways, refereeing and things like that, but

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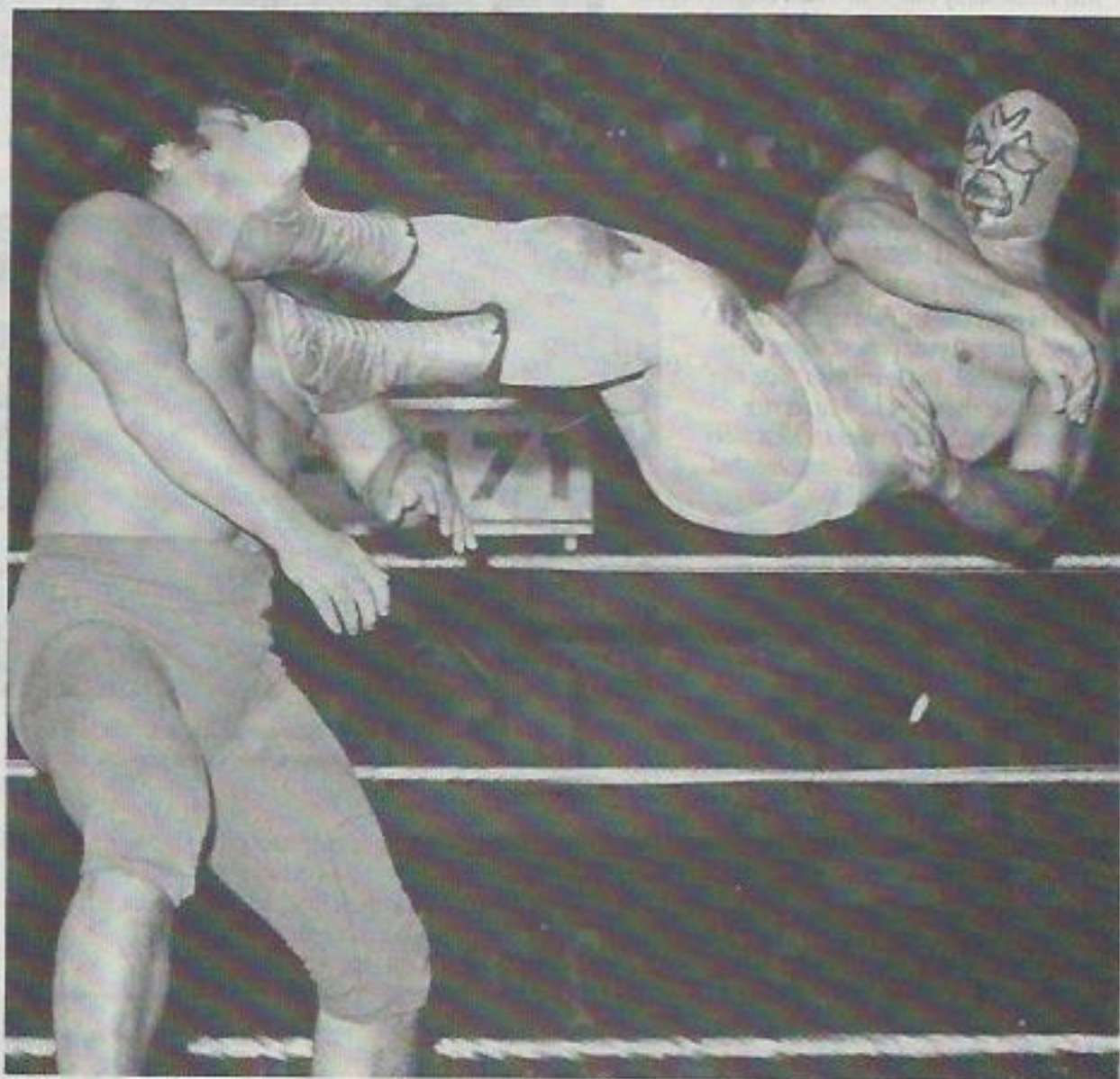
Ted DiBiase proudly displays the Missouri State championship belt after a grueling victory over Ken Patera (below left). After 21 brilliant years in wrestling, Gorilla Monsoon (below right) has announced his retirement.



DRESSING CONFIDENTIAL ROOM

By Stu Saks

MIL MASCARAS SAT on the floor, his right leg tucked toward his rear, his left leg outstretched. With both hands he grabbed his left toe, straightening his torso over the extended leg. He held the position for 10 seconds and then pulled in his left leg and extended the right.



Mil Mascaras stands poised for action (left), but it would not be long before both legs would be in the air. Mil goes way up to dropkick Mr. Saito's chin (above). Nobody in the sport has quicker moves than Mascaras. He is regarded as the Guru of aerial wrestling by most young scientific wrestlers.

"The legs have to be loose," he said. "You just can't get in the ring and start jumping around without loosening up those muscles. If you go in cold, you'll injure yourself for sure."

A group of three young wrestlers had gathered to watch Mascaras perform his prematch exercises. Nothing out of the ordinary. Just

plain stretching exercises that any wrestler should do.

Except this was not just any wrestler. This was Mil Mascaras. When Sugar Ray Leonard shadow-boxes, he draws a crowd of boxing hopefuls. When Liberace cracks his knuckles, aspiring pianists watch in awe. When E.F. Hutton talks, people listen.

Mil Mascaras does not face the same type of pressure most professional wrestlers face. He is not merely a wrestler. He is a living textbook on the art of aerial wrestling. He is a model to every young man in the sport who chooses the high-flying route to success.

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A—ON— ASSIGNMENT

BY STEVEN FARHOOD

"A SHORT TRIP this month, Farhood," mumbled Matt Brock. I'm sending you up to Mount Vernon, back to Albano's place, to spend some time with the Moondogs. No one's ever seen anything like them, and the fans want to know what they're really like. Just you, the Captain, and the Moondogs. Enjoy yourself."

Doesn't the poor little Lebanese kid ever get a break? Syria to see the Sheik, Miami to play hoops against Koloff and Volkoff, the Carolinas to play Poker with Stevens, Anderson, and the boys, and now this. Sometimes I think Brock is trying

to ruin me before I reach 30.

A day with Albano and the Moondogs includes some serious preparation. First step: Take the elevator to the main floor and bare my bottom for a rabies-prevention shot from Dr. Marks. You think I'm kidding? There's not a mailman in Mount Vernon who will step a foot near Albano's house. Step two: Dress in shabby, old clothes. The Moondogs bite and slobber a lot. No need to ruin my three-piece Yves St. Laurent pinstrip special. Step three: Carry a Bible at all times and pray for my life.

Albano met me at the train station. No Moondogs in sight.

Then we walked over to his station wagon. Rex was tied by a leash to the front fender. King was locked in the back seat. Neither looked particularly thrilled to see me. I felt nauseous and wondered why I hadn't brought a can of mace.

Albano began to pet Rex. "Good doggie, you were a good doggie while I was gone." The smile on the Captain's face was a nervous one. He reached into his coat pocket and threw a half-eaten dog biscuit to the floor. "Good doggie, Rex," he said again as the blond beast began to attack his reward.

"Don't tell King, but Rex is my favorite," Albano confided in me. "I can discuss a lot more with him. King's mind tends to wander, but Rex is a prize canine. You can tell he was brought up well. Good American stock."

I was scared to ask Albano if he had ever met Rex's parents. Instead, I got into the car. Bad move. King began to bark heavily, like he was having an asthmatic attack or something. I dove for the still-open door and hit my head on the roof of the car. Albano started to laugh.

"They'll get to like you," he promised. "Once they know they can trust you, they'll stick to you like glue."

Some guys have all the luck.

"The Moondogs have read some of your columns and they think you're a very fair journalist," he continued.

(Continued on page 55)



Capt. Lou Albano maintains control over his snarling Moondogs. Steve Farhood loves dogs, but only those of the four-legged variety. He found *The Moondogs* to be a tough interview.

THE MORGENSTEIN REPORT.....

By Gary Morgenstein

DUMP HAYES?

Why do Terry Gordy and Buddy Roberts allow themselves to be used by their fellow member of The Freebirds, Michael Hayes? Time after time, Hayes manages to expend the least effort in the ring and extract the maximum publicity. If Roberts and Gordy have any brains,

which I doubt, they'll issue an ultimatum to Hayes: either join us in full-force or leave the corporation. But I doubt they will. I fear Hayes is the guiding power behind the peculiar trumvirate. I fear Hayes calls all the shots. Too bad for Roberts and Gordy.



SECTION-EIGHT DEATH MATCH!

I suggest all members of the American Psychiatric Association watch the films of the recent Buggy McGraw-Mark Lewin match in Texas. As the bout demonstrated, neither plays with a full deck. In fact, McGraw holds a six and Lewin a three and five. Talk about bluffing! Both are on the other side of sanity. Hopefully, these two certifiable maniacs will be given the proper medical

treatment they need to resume normal lives.



AMORAL MURDOCH

Dick Murdoch turns my stomach and I sincerely hope Dusty Rhodes batters him from one end of the arena to the other. Poor little Dick. Don't have enough money, Dick baby? Don't have enough prestige, Dick babe? That why you have to sell your soul for a bag of coins and accept checks from a man like Lord Al Hays? Murdoch's utterly contemptuous decision to perform "outlaw deeds for outlaw wages" shows the true color of the man's guts. What Murdoch doesn't realize is the vast courage needed to adhere to principles in a world determined to wrest and shatter any man's morals. Thus Murdoch's decision is a simple one. It takes no great mind to obey Hays' decision to wrestle anyone in the universe. It takes no great courage to accept blank checks. But it takes a shallow man to consider wrestling his best friend. I hope Rhodes doesn't enter the ring filled with any false notions that Murdoch would refrain from the most ruthless tactics. Accept it, Dusty, as painful as it might be. And fight back. Show the world this sort of man doesn't belong in wrestling, much less the human race.

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If you wish to contribute to Shocket's mailbag, send your letters to:

TOP ROPE
Box 48
Rockville Centre, N.Y.
11571

OFF THE ROPE

By Dan Shocket

ONCE AGAIN, I'M forced to repeat myself. Many readers continue to end their moronic letters, "I dare you to print this!" Now, I'm going to say this the simplest way possible, so there's a chance you might understand. Letters are chosen because they are well written and have something to say. Anyone who stupidly dares me to print their letter might as well save themselves the stamp; I don't take dares. Believe me, clowns, you don't have the brains to write something too shocking or insulting for me to print.

Sir:

You always defend the bad guys and put down the good ones. Let's see what you say about Tommy Rich, the egotistical maniac of the year.

I just saw a match in Chattanooga, Tennessee, that turned my stomach. Tommy's not a scientific wrestler anymore. There is nothing professional about him. All I can say about Rich leaving Georgia is GOOD RIDDANCE to bad rubbish.

WANDA McCLURE
Atlanta, GA

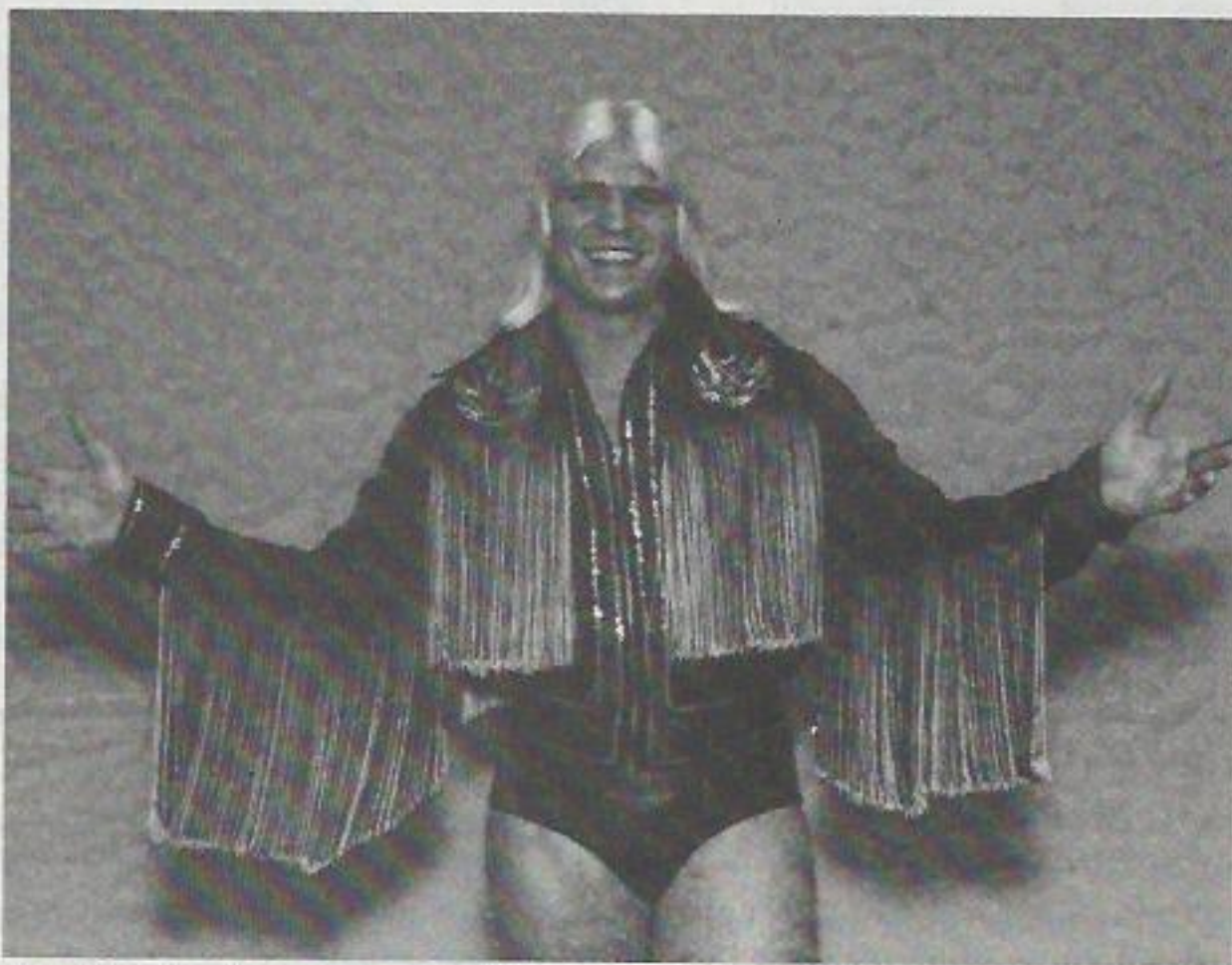
Madame:

Many of Rich's former fans have written to me in anger and distress. To you and all of them, dry your eyes. Tommy Rich has never shown the guts to battle the tide. I predict before long

Dear Shocket,

I think you are very smart giving so-called rulebreakers a fair chance. Like the saying goes, nice guys finish last.

For example, look at handsome Ken Patera. Another



Dan Shocket has not accepted Tommy Rich as a bonafide rulebreaker. Rich, he feels, will not be able to take the pressure brought on by facing hostile crowds night after night, and he will eventually change back to a fan favorite. Reader Wanda McClure calls Rich the "egotistical maniac of the year."

he'll be trying once again to be a fan favorite. Rich has far to go before I'll start complimenting him.

example of a successful "rule-breaker" is undefeated Hulk Hogan. Why can't people understand wrestling is all for

money? It's not for trying to make a good impression on the young generation.

SHARON PAGLIARULO
Boston, MA

Dear Pagliarulo,

There is more to wrestling than money. So-called rule-breakers have a great vision for wrestling and they're willing to suffer to realize it. They enjoy money, but they love the splendor of combat. I agree, however, that toadies like Bob Backlund are despicable for cloaking their cowardice under a veil of "sportsmanship."

Dear Mr. Shocket:

Okay, buddy, I've had enough of your sick comments on how rulebreakers are much better than scientific wrestlers. Why don't you say good things about men like Dusty Rhodes and David Von Erich? You are so insane you should be in a mental hospital.

So start printing good things about scientific wrestlers, you geek.

DAVID McCLUSKEY
St. Louis, MO

Dear Mr. McCluskey,

You win. I think it's wonderful that scientific wrestlers can fool the simple-minded so easily.

Dear Dan,

I love to read your column, though I disagree with some of the things you say.

You have praised many good tag teams in the past, but as yet, you have failed to mention the greatest new dimension in wrestling. I'm talking about The Fabulous Freebirds.

Forming a corporation is an act of genius. Now, any two of the three men can wrestle any tag team match. No strategy can be worked out because the opponents don't know until the last minute who they'll wrestle.



WWF champion Bob Backlund is mobbed by young fans after a successful title defense. "Top Rope" contributor Sharon Pagliarulo believes that wrestlers care only about money and not the impression they leave on fans.

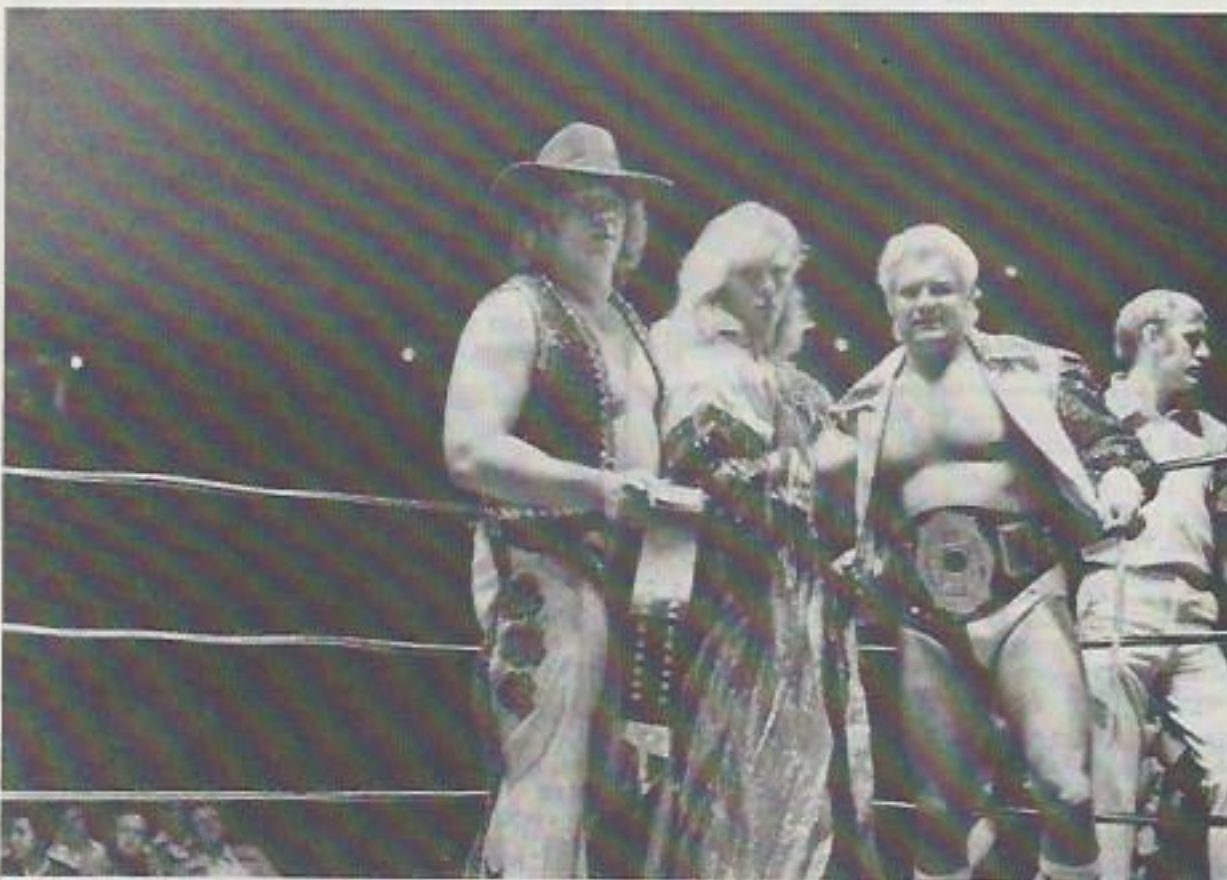
The Freebirds are the team of the future and deserve recognition in your column. I would also like to know your opinion of The Freebirds.

ANGIE MILLER
Johnson City, TN

Dear Angie,

The Fabulous Freebirds are certainly clever, though it'll take a while before they can claim

being geniuses. Sooner or later, the better tag team will devise strategies against them. If The Freebirds can then continue to conquer, building on their idea to continually thwart opponents, then cheers will be well deserved. Until then, I couldn't recommend all ambitious tag teams form corporations. □

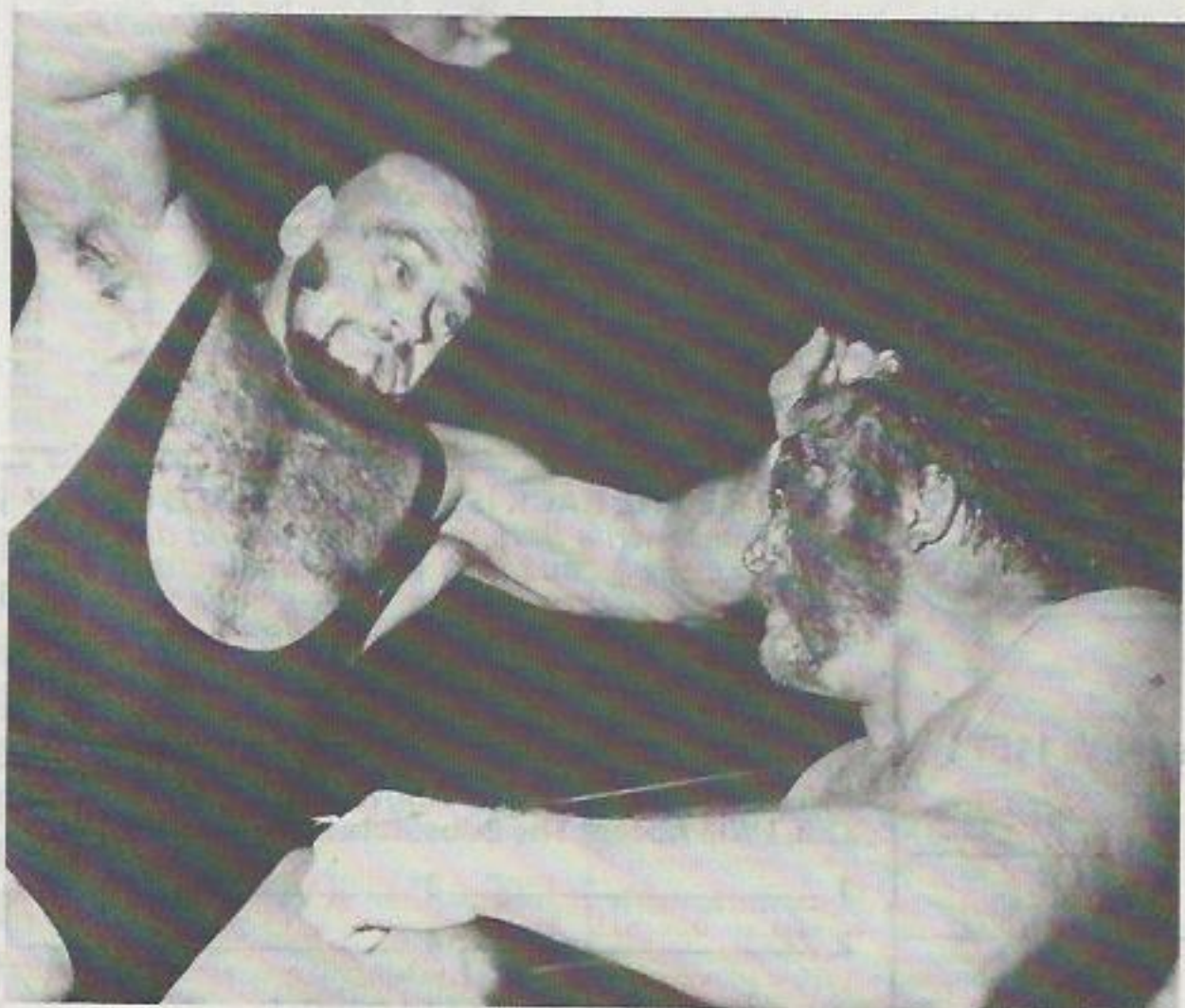


Though reader Angie Miller calls The Fabulous Freebirds the "greatest new dimension in wrestling," Shocket is somewhat hesitant to offer such lavish praise to the Georgia tag team champions so early.

Every month, three reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport

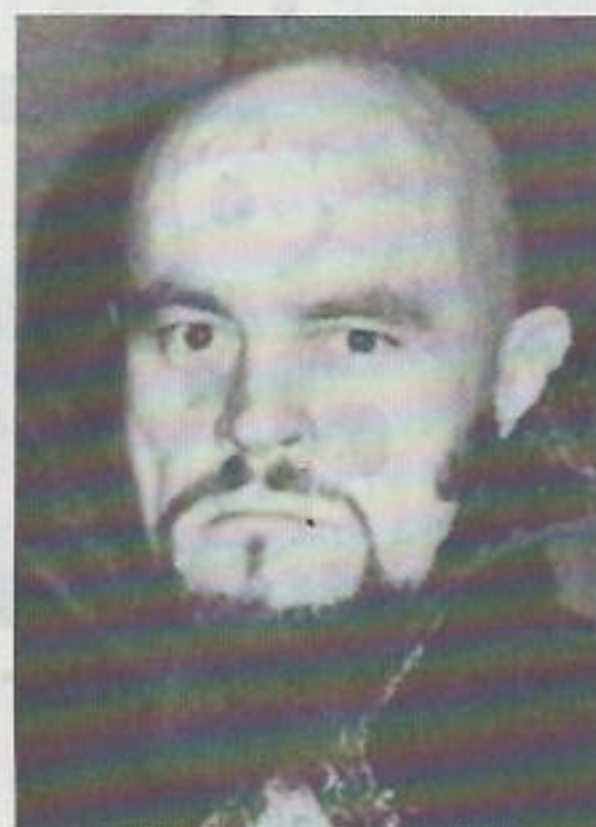
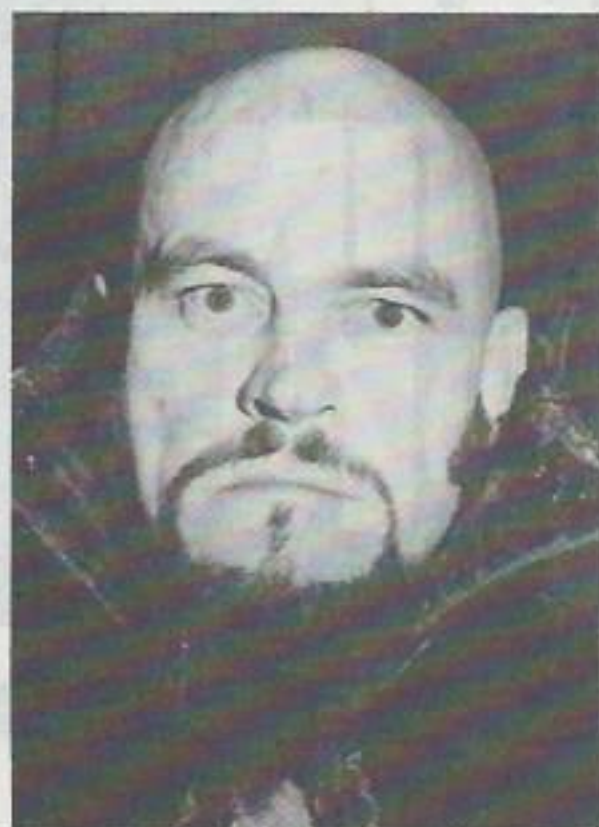
PRESS CONFERENCE

IVAN KOLOFF



(Controversy shadows Ivan Koloff in every area he has ever wrestled. When WWF champion, Koloff's evil treachery ripped through the entire territory until Pedro Morales seized the belt from the cunning Russian. In Florida, Koloff joined Sir Oliver Humperdink's Army and teamed with fellow Soviet Nikolai Volkoff to wage war on that state's scientific wrestlers. In Texas, Koloff feuded with Mil Mascaras. Now Koloff violates the Mid-Atlantic, declaring war on all local wrestlers and even bickering with tag team partner Hussein Arab. Managing Editor Bill Apter and Associate Editors

"Foolish Americans resent my native superiority and try to stop me. Occasionally, a native American manages to find it within himself to stay with me in both mental and physical skills. But always, like Humperdink or Arab, they succumb to their basic native stupidity."



Stu Saks and Dan Shocket conducted this edition of Press Conference.)

BILL APTER: Ivan, why are you constantly embroiled in controversy?

IVAN KOLOFF: Capitalist pig enemies pursue and interfere with me in every step of the way. Foolish Americans resent my native superiority and try to stop me. Occasionally, a native American manages to find it within himself to stay with me in both mental and physical skills. But always, like Humperdink or Arab, they succumb to their basic native stupidity.

STU SAKS: Are you saying your split with Humperdink was due to his stupidity?

KOLOFF: I apologize, I did not phrase it accurately. Your language is so guttural and barbaric, I sometimes have difficulty translating my brilliant thoughts from lovely mother Russian into your grunting tones. I should say Humperdink is a coward.

DAN SHOCKET: Sir, I'm quite certain the world would enjoy a detailed explanation of your labelling Humperdink a coward.

KOLOFF: Certainly, Daniel. Humperdink ran at the first sign of trouble. As soon as some courageous action was required, Humperdink fled the premises. He was not bright enough to keep the Army together nor meet the

competitive challenge of Lord Al Hays, who only wished his share of the action, nothing more. But once Oliver Humperdink saw trouble, he ran and hid behind Dusty Rhodes.

SAKS: Isn't it true you betrayed Humperdink?

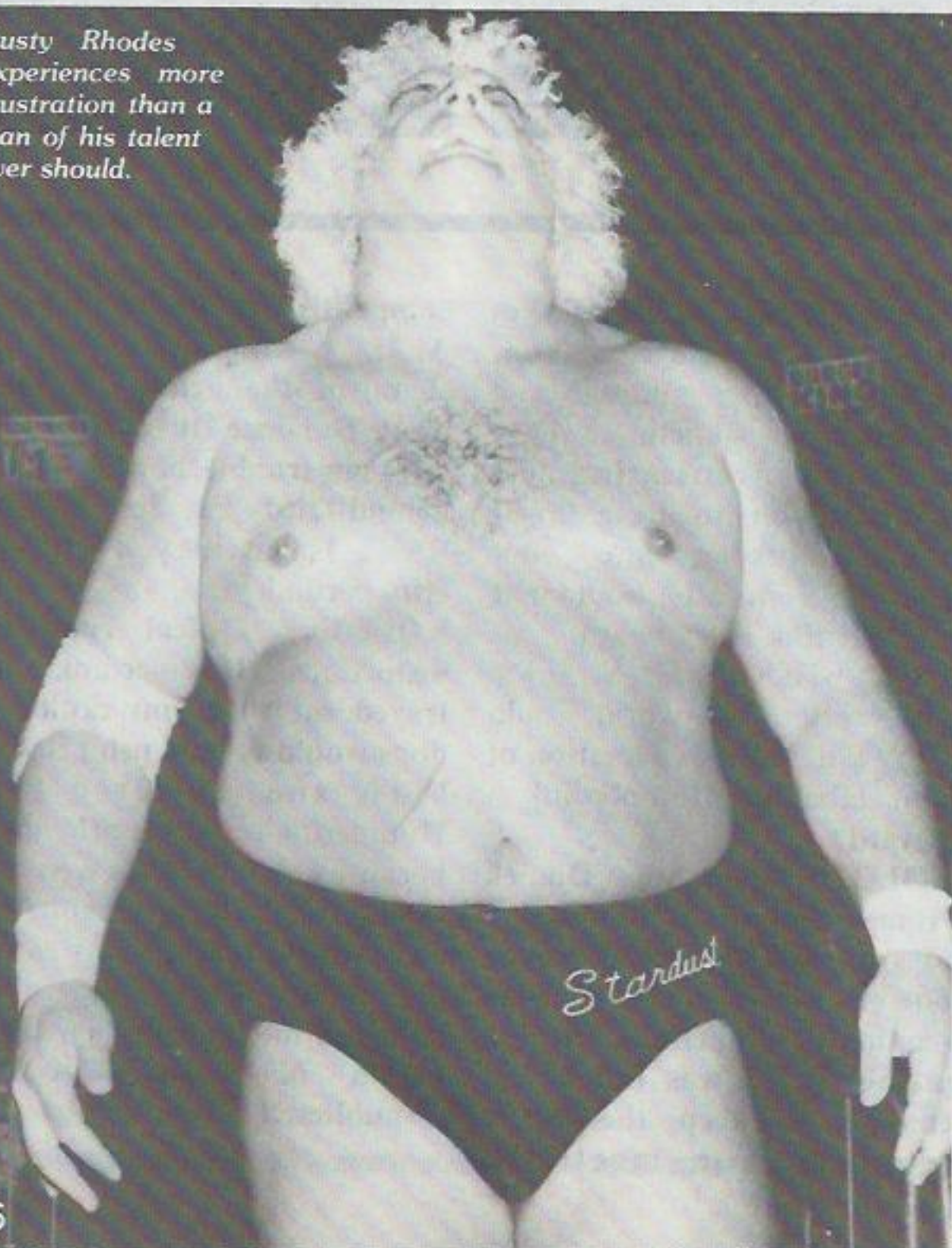
KOLOFF: Typical capitalist distortions. Humperdink betrayed me, but you capitalist dogs wouldn't dare print that. I bled and suffered for Humperdink and his principles because I thought they were the kind of principles of equality and fairness I worked my entire life for. But when Humperdink betrayed me, and betrayed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I could not bare it

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**Special
Editorial**

THE MAN WHO PREVENTS DUSTY RHODES FROM BECOMING CHAMPION

*Dusty Rhodes
experiences more
frustration than a
man of his talent
ever should.*



Sooner or later, Dusty Rhodes must come to grips with the harsh facts of life. It is all well and good for Rhodes to blame external factors for his inability to win and hold a major championship. But if The American Dream is ever to realize his dream of becoming a champion, he must surmount his toughest foe: Dusty Rhodes



Rhodes rightfully blamed Terry Funk (above) for his loss of the NWA title, as Funk broke Dusty's arm in a sneak-attack before his defense against Harley Race. But the only person he could really blame since that incident is himself. Rhodes defends his "people's championship" against Nikolai Volkoff (below).

THE TIME HAS come for Dusty Rhodes to take some responsibility for his failure to become NWA champion. He can no longer blame luck, the commissions, his admittedly torturous schedule, or the full moon. He isn't champion because Dusty Rhodes has not won the title in a wrestling match.

The editors of this magazine feel compelled to print this article. For too long, we and the rest of the wrestling world have been referring to Dusty Rhodes as the "People's Champion," the "Uncrowned Champion," and other like nicknames. We are as responsible as anyone else for what has happened.

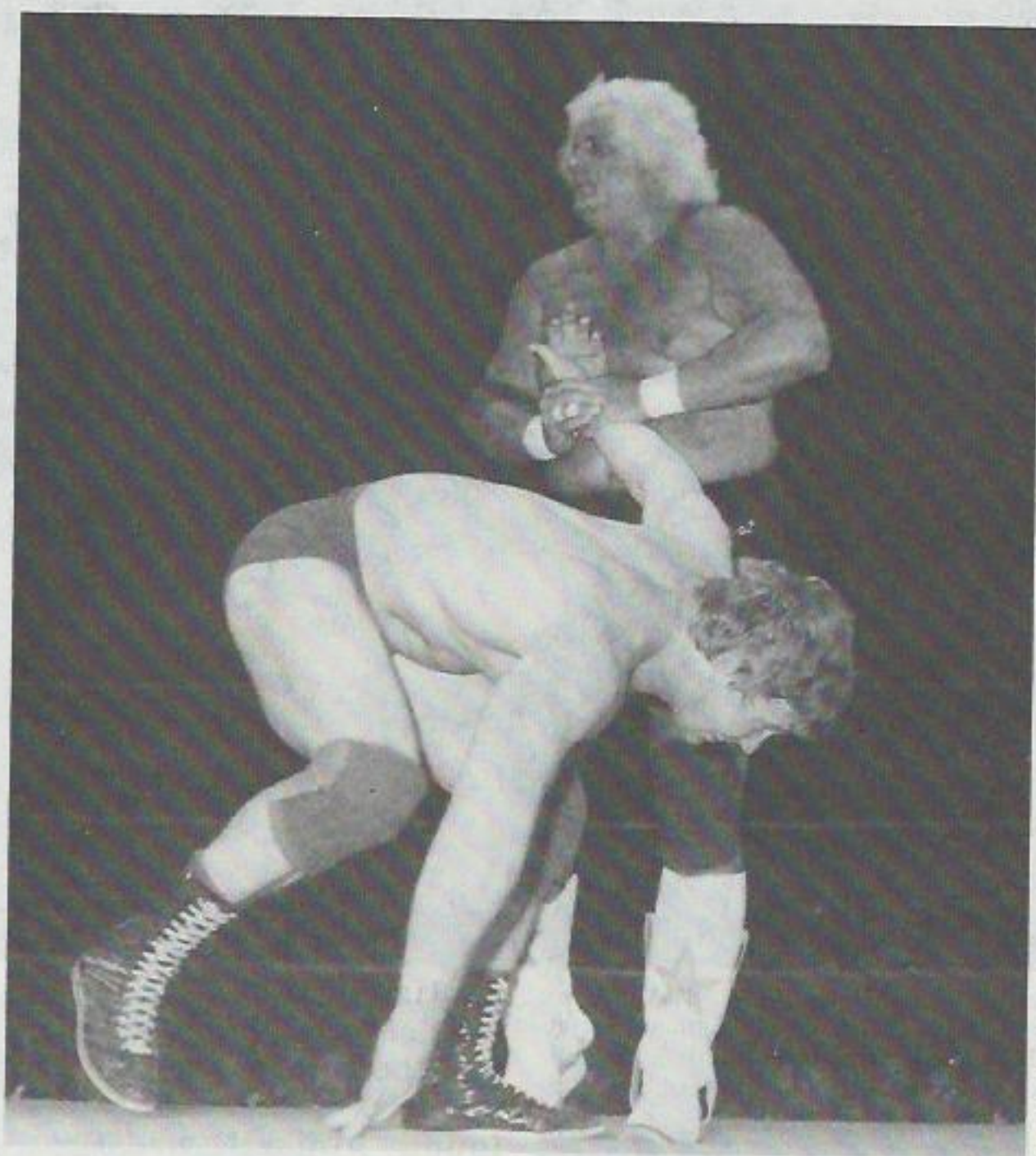
Dusty Rhodes now regards himself as some sort of champion. He is not. It is time he and the rest of us



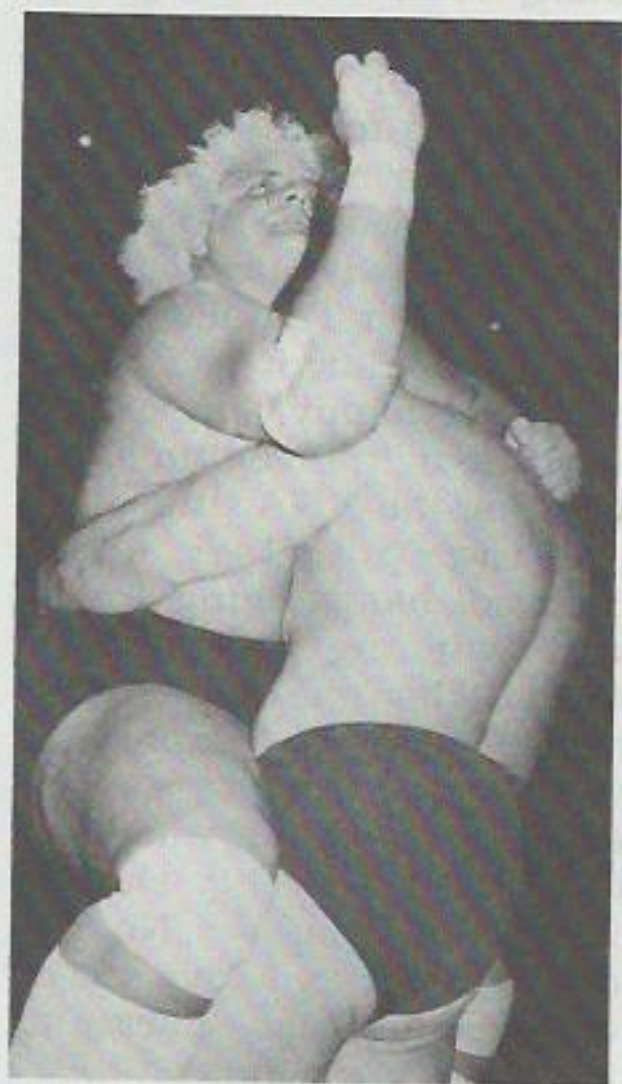
realized that. He is a challenger, a man who must win the title and hold it for longer than one week. He has found himself wrestling to protect a crown that doesn't exist.

The situation is not all Dusty's fault. The blame lies equally with the fans and the media. Our respect and admiration for the man has clouded our reason. Many of us want to see him champion that we'll twist the facts to suit the wish. That has made Dusty popular, it has made fans feel happy, *but it has kept Dusty from legitimately winning the NWA title.*

Being popular, even beloved, has nothing to do with winning a wrestling match. When one's popularity becomes more important than anything else, everything suffers. No one can deny Dusty's ability should make him champion. No one can deny Dusty's love affair with the fans has distracted him from that goal.



After his unsuccessful attempt at Bob Backlund's WWF title in Japan (above), Dusty has not sought any world title. Rhodes looks to the fans for support as he tries to escape from Volkoff's bearhug (below). Perhaps Dusty should consider his career before the wishes of the fans.



Looking back on it, evidence of the situation was clear last August. Dusty announced if he didn't win the title from Harley Race, he'd never wrestle Race for the title again. We are so used to treating Dusty as a champion, no one said anything. It took months to recognize the truth of the situation.

Dusty Rhodes has no right to make a statement like that!

It is a champion's prerogative to wrestle any man he chooses. A challenger should always, always, be ready for a title match. For a challenger to take himself out of the picture, like Rhodes did, is ridiculous. He should want

as many shots as he can get. To announce his rejection of title matches is violating every ideal of wrestling. Yet, when Dusty made his vow, no one said a word. After all, didn't Dusty deserve to make that kind of statement?

No!

Dusty should follow the same rules as any other challenger. He should not rest until he wins the title. It's not for him to decide to take himself out of championship contention. If he wants to stop trying for the title, he should retire altogether.

Dusty, the fans, and the media have to start looking at the situation realistically. Dusty is on the same plane as men like Paul Jones, Ted DiBiase, Dick Murdoch, and a host of others. Dusty must actively seek title chances. Words like "People's Champion" should be stricken from his vocabulary.

Hardest of all, Rhodes and the fans have to get some distance from each other. As long as Dusty worries about the fans' reactions, he'll never be able to do his best. As long as the fans applaud Dusty regardless of the outcome, Rhodes won't force himself to do his best. Dusty and the fans are ruining Rhodes' career.

Right now, and we hope we're wrong, Dusty Rhodes could not become champion in any area. In a recent match against Nikolai Volkoff, Dusty lacked the hunger that made him great. He seems content to rest on his laurels. Instead, he should be savaging his opponents, mowing them down in his path to another title shot.

Mr. Wrestling II recently said, "Dusty should have

(Continued on page 62)

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

Every month, our reporters will compile wrestlers' most revealing quotes. Often catching the grapplers with their guards down, our reporters will work endlessly in obtaining interesting quotes on a variety of subjects

BOB BACKLUND

"Being champion isn't the perfect life. It means traveling, constant tension, wrestling with pain, and never getting enough time to yourself. Yet, I wouldn't trade the life for anything. I wonder why sometimes. I guess there are people who just weren't made to lead a normal life. Guess I'm one of them."



LARRY ZBYSZKO

"Sure, there are moments I wish the break with Bruno had never happened. Then I think what my life was like living in his shadow. Then I realize what my life is like now. Considering that I'm ranked higher than ever before, figure to get a title shot real soon, and other wrestlers take me seriously, considering all that, I don't ever want to become friends with Bruno. The man wrecked my career. Wrecking him is the only way I can save it."



RIC FLAIR

"I've gone through some changes since I became a wrestler. All men my age go through those changes. I just did it in public. I'll probably go through even more changes. The public will try to analyze me, choose up sides, tell me whether I'm right or wrong. If it keeps them busy, that's fine with me. I'm just going to do what makes me happy, makes me win."



GREG GAGNE

"My father has helped me all through my life. He's given me encouragement, taught me everything I know, and helped me when the going got tough. I wouldn't trade my life for anybody's. If I never become champion, I can live with that. My father was and is champion. As far as I'm concerned, it's all in the family."

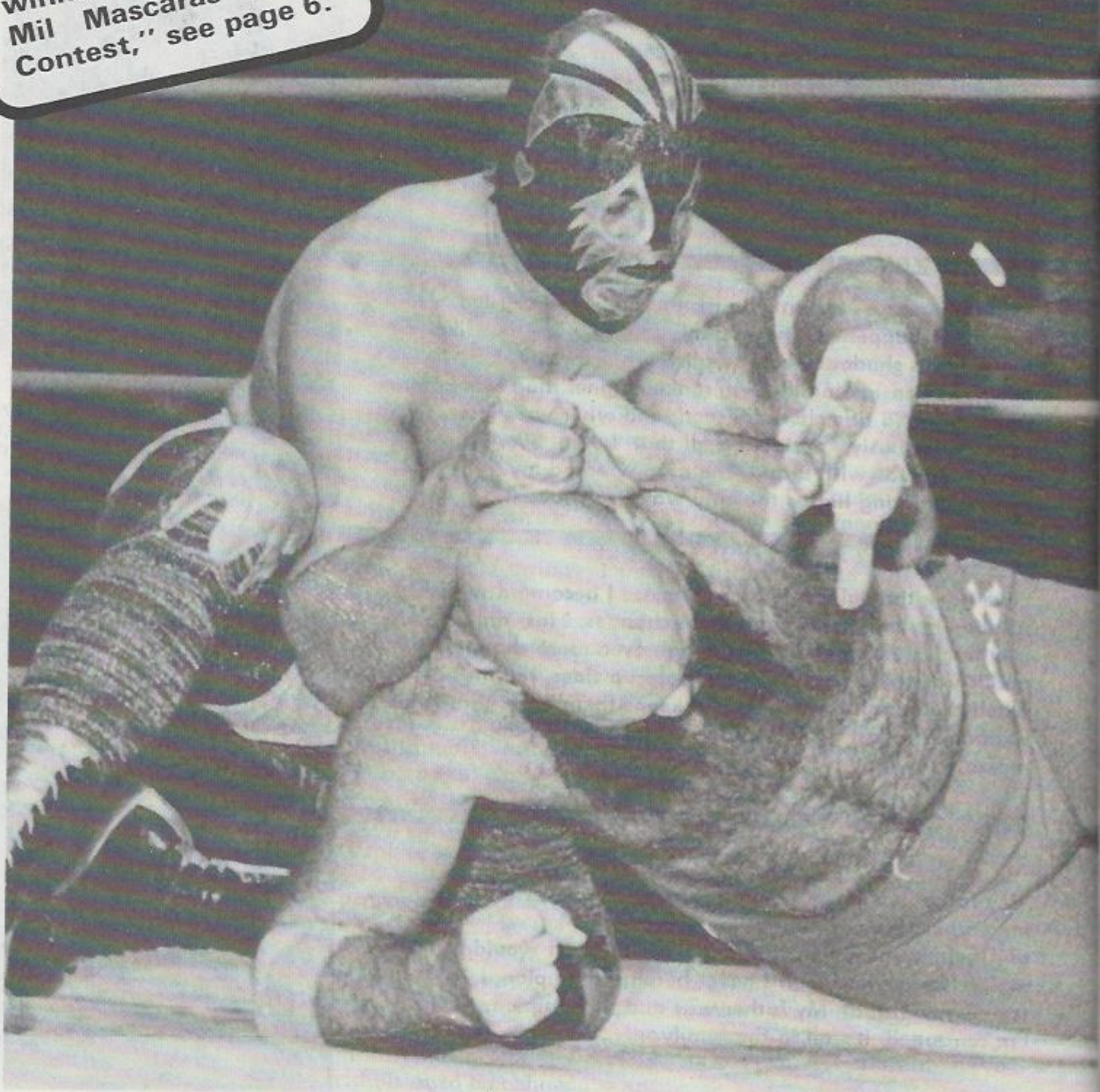


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MIL: "OX BA MASCARAS: OF THE

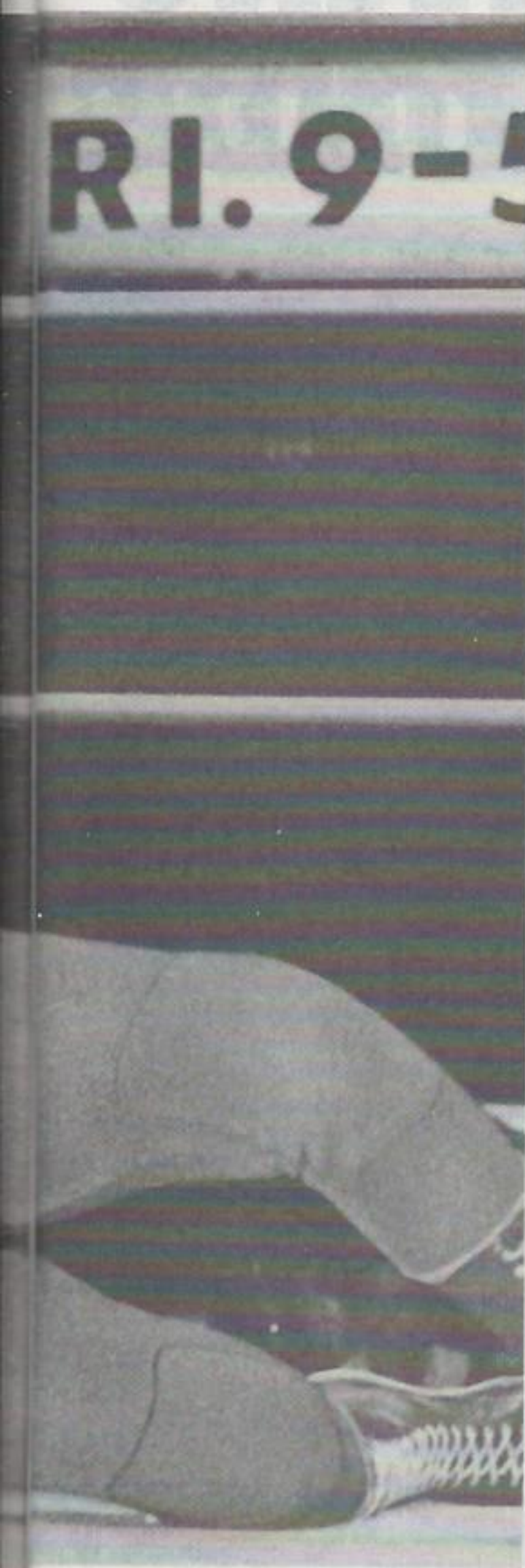
Editor's Note: For the winner of the "Win A Mil Mascaras Mask Contest," see page 6.

Mascaras clasps his hands to force Baker to the mat with a half-nelson.



BAKER, YOU'RE ONE OF THE GREAT ONES!"

PHOTOS BY
THEO EHRET



IT WAS A RESTLESS, hungry feeling that meant no one any good. Ox Baker felt one too many mornings and a thousand miles behind. Somewhere back there was the man he intended to be.

As he lay in his motel bed, Baker thought about the man he had become. That thought had been forcing itself on him a lot lately. Back when he started, Ox fancied himself an honest, scientific wrestler. He gloried in his skill and integrity. Then he got hungry, then he got angry, and then he became a rulebreaker. He tells himself he doesn't regret the decision, but he doesn't always believe himself.

Something inside him, something that he managed to keep buried until recently, had forced itself to the surface. That something is the nagging question of how good Baker would be as a scientific wrestler. Usually, he's able to fight back the question. But that morning, on the motel bed in Los Angeles, the question kept haunting him.

The time had come for Baker to wonder about the path not taken. Could he have made it as a scientific wrestler? Would the people have cheered him as they now cheer Mil Mascaras?

That morning, how Baker hated

Mascaras! The masked mat star was everything Baker wasn't—beloved, respected, a legend in his own time. Many consider Mascaras the best wrestler of his era. They also consider Baker one of the most savage. As Ox knows too well, that's not the same thing.

In less than 10 hours, Baker thought, I'll be wrestling Mascaras. I'll have him in my grasp and break him in two. Baker thought about all the dirty moves he'd use to torture Mascaras. Then he suddenly stopped. Thinking about the dirty moves made him more miserable. That night, rulebreaking wouldn't solve anything.

Baker sat bolt upright. Beads of sweat broke out along his body. He made a decision he knew was crazy, almost suicidal. He'd waited for years to get Mascaras. He had planned just how he'd batter the mat star senseless. Now, he was going to throw that away for something he couldn't even define. Yet, he knew as soon as he made the decision, it was final. Baker would wrestle Mascaras scientifically. There'd be no dirty moves.

That night, Baker didn't hear the boos that greeted his entrance into the arena. He didn't hear the

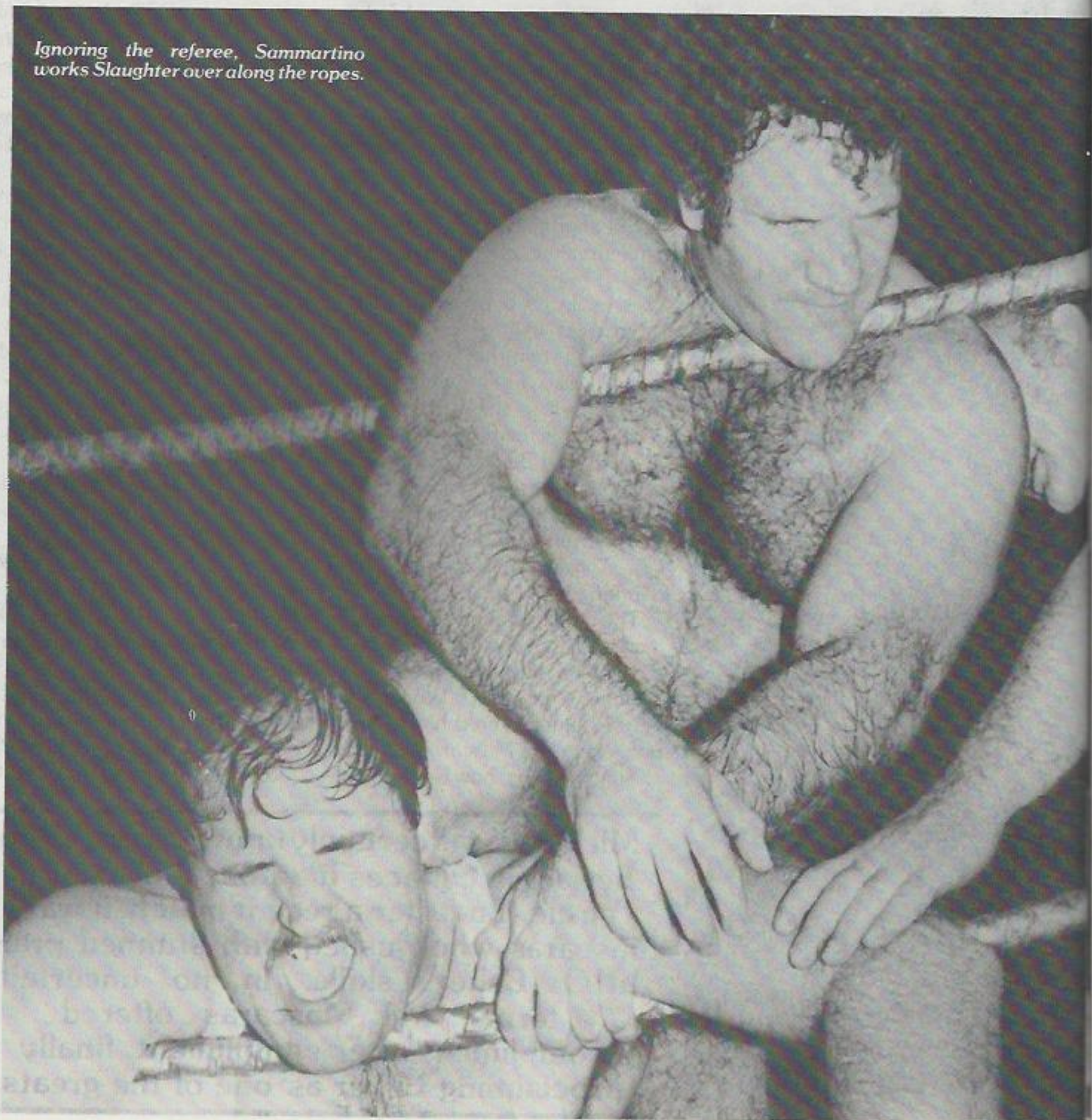
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Mil Mascaras certainly knows talent when he sees it. Or faces it across the squared circle. But after a recent match, it was Mascaras who gushed with stunned praise at Ox Baker's skills. In no uncertain terms, Mil Mascaras offered compliment after compliment, finally proclaiming Baker as one of the greats

PHOTOS BY
STU SAKS

IS BRUNO SAMMARTINO BOB BACKLUND'S

Ignoring the referee, Sammartino works Slaughter over along the ropes.



A curious pattern develops in the struggle for Bob Backlund's WWF championship. Inexplicably, Backlund isn't around against some of the tougher local contenders like Hulk Hogan, Ken Patera, and Sgt. Slaughter. While it should be the champion meeting these men, instead it is the Living Legend, Bruno Sammartino. Why?

BODYGUARD?

"I DON'T LIKE that creep Ken Patera or that dirty bum Sgt. Slaughter," shouted Bruno Sammartino. "I don't like any of them. This is my feud against them. I want to destroy them."

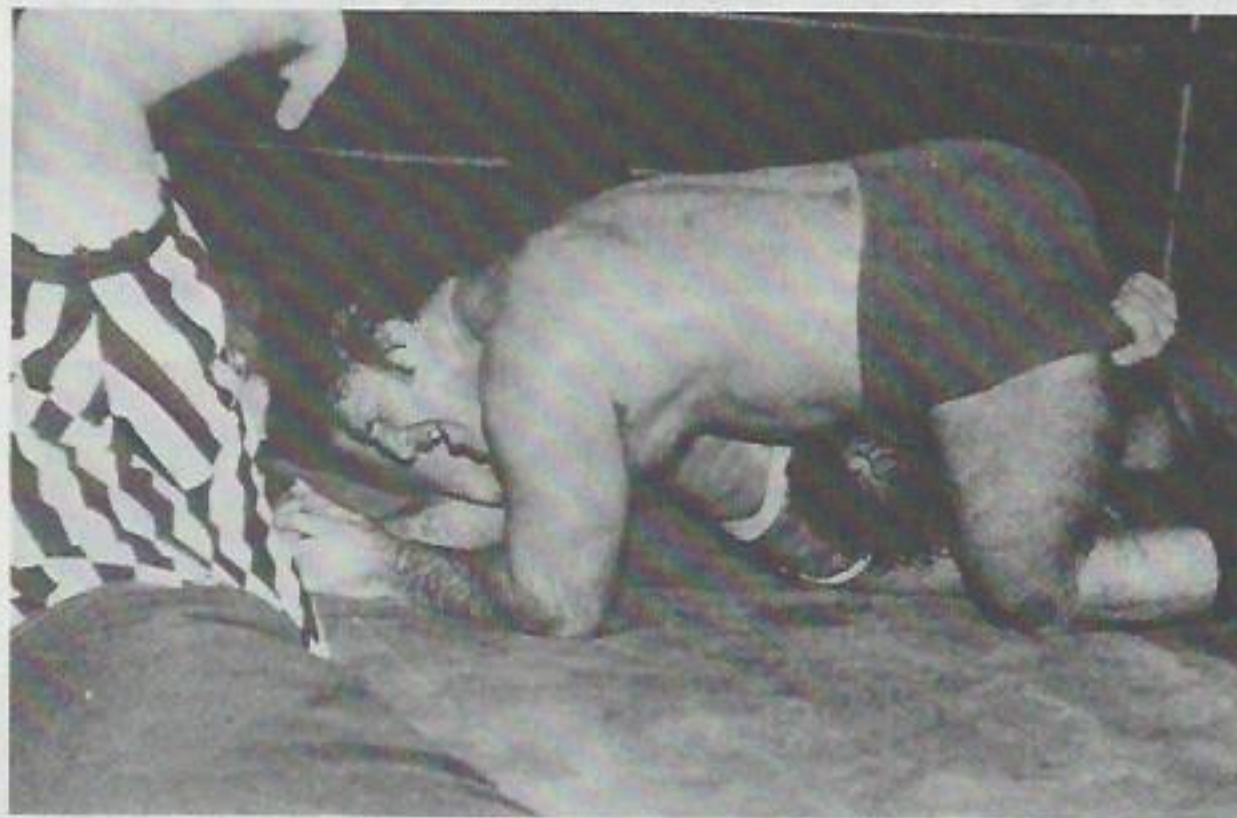
For the first time in his professional wrestling career, Bruno Sammartino could be telling something less than the truth.

It could be more than coincidence that WWF champion Bob Backlund isn't around to finish off the stiff competition. It could be more than coincidence that Sammartino takes it upon himself to try and wipe out Backlund's competition. These curious coincidences lend credence to the conclusion that Bruno Sammartino serves as Bob Backlund's bodyguard.

"That is ridiculous," snapped Sammartino in an uncharacteristic display of irritation. "I do this because I want to do this. Backlund doesn't need to fight his battles."

"I think my record speaks for itself," Backlund replied coolly. "I have met all the top contenders and never shied away from any match offered me. I've defended my title many times, and I don't have to defend myself against any charges."

Yet the indisputable facts persist. Backlund, while meeting both Slaughter and Patera, never did wrestle them to a successful



Slaughter pulls Bruno off by his trunks just before the referee's count reaches three (above). Slaughter tries to clobber Bruno with a chair, but Bruno nimbly moves aside (below). The chair bounced off the ropes, and opened a cut on Slaughter's forehead.



resolution. And both contenders charge Backlund refused to consider further matches.

"He's ducking me," insists

Patera. "He's damn afraid to meet me again because he knows I'll blast his face to smithereens. So Howdy Doody

CLOSE-UP

HULK HOGAN



DISCOVERED BY FRED BLASSIE on the beaches of Venice, California . . . When Blassie first introduced him to the wrestling world, fans feared his massive size and strength would make him unstoppable . . . Under Blassie's sadistic guidance, the Incredible Hulk Hogan has lost all shred of morals and principles and is willing to do whatever necessary to win . . . At 6-8 and well over 300 pounds, Hogan poses a difficult problem for all foes . . . Besides his raw power, Hogan also possesses deceptive agility and speed . . . Quickly, Hogan earned the justifiable contempt of all WWF fans . . . With Blassie carefully and shrewdly guiding his career, Hogan moved steadily up the WWF ratings . . . However, the big prize, the title shot against champion Bob Backlund, has yet to

materialize . . . Hogan and Blassie charge the young champion ducks Hogan out of fear, while Backlund coolly maintains that his challengers are selected by the WWF . . . While waiting for the title match he's vowed to win, Hogan is presently embroiled in a bitter feud with Andre the Giant . . . When these two behemoths meet each other, the ring actually trembles . . . Neither had ever met a foe of equal size, so their matches have swiftly gone into the books as all-time classics . . . Hogan recently went on a tour of Japan where he threatened to demolish arenas, opponents, and fans if they were foolish enough to get in his way . . . Not unexpectedly, Hogan was totally despised in Japan . . . With Fred Blassie as his manager, Hogan remains a dangerous, highly unpredictable grappler. □

CLOSE-UP

TOUGHEST OPPONENT

"I gotta give the big ugly freak Andre the Goon the nod as my toughest opponent. Course, no one is really tough for me. I mean, I'm so damn smart and strong that it's just a question of who can stay in the ring longest. But Andre poses a special kinda problem 'cause you gotta look at his ugly face while you're wrestlin' him."



FAVORITE MANEUVER

"I love to use the flying legdrop on people. Since no one can figure out how to defend against it, it's unstoppable. It is the most effective way to cripple a guy. I just love to hurt people. I love to crush a leg or snap a limb or hear the guy scream out in pain. Sometimes the sound of screams means more than money. Don't tell Fred Blassie I said that."

MOST HATED

"Hate? How can I even measure hatred when I talk about a gutless coward like Pat Patterson. I hate Patterson so much, I almost feel sorry for him 'cause eventually I'm gonna destroy his ugly face and smash him into the ground. Course, I gotta catch him first. I'll give him credit for one thing: Patterson can sure run fast."



GREATEST MATCH

"Any match with the Incredible Hulk Hogan gotta be a great match, right? But the one I had against Andre the Goon at Shea Stadium was a terrific match. I was never better, chasing Andre around the ring, twisting his body like a pretzel and him screamin' and beggin' for mercy."

GENE ANDERSON'S EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

JUST A FEW short months ago, Gene Anderson's plan was working so very well.

His Mid-Atlantic stable grew every week. Not only did he have the Mid-Atlantic tag team champions, Jimmy Snuka and Ray Stevens, but Anderson also managed Masked Superstar and the Mid-Atlantic champion, Hussein Arab. Outside that area, Gene and brother Ole's war against the third brother, Lars, seemed close to resolution with Gene about to claim total victory.

Given a little more time, Anderson could have realized his dream of a two-area empire. Holding all the champions in the Mid-Atlantic area and slowly working his way to the top in Georgia, Anderson could have achieved what no other wrestling manager ever had.

And then like a line of dominos, it all came undone.

But why? Answers beget further questions. Did Anderson allow ambition to stretch his resources, in effect over-extending himself?



Formerly one of the prized members of the Gene Anderson stable, Masked Superstar goes for a pin against his former manager. Why are Anderson's men in revolt?

Did Anderson miscalculate? Or was his empire always fragile, held together by common needs without slightest shred of loyalty?

Restating facts of the rise and fall of the Anderson Empire furnish insights into how far-flung it was. First came Masked Superstar's defection. Several times on

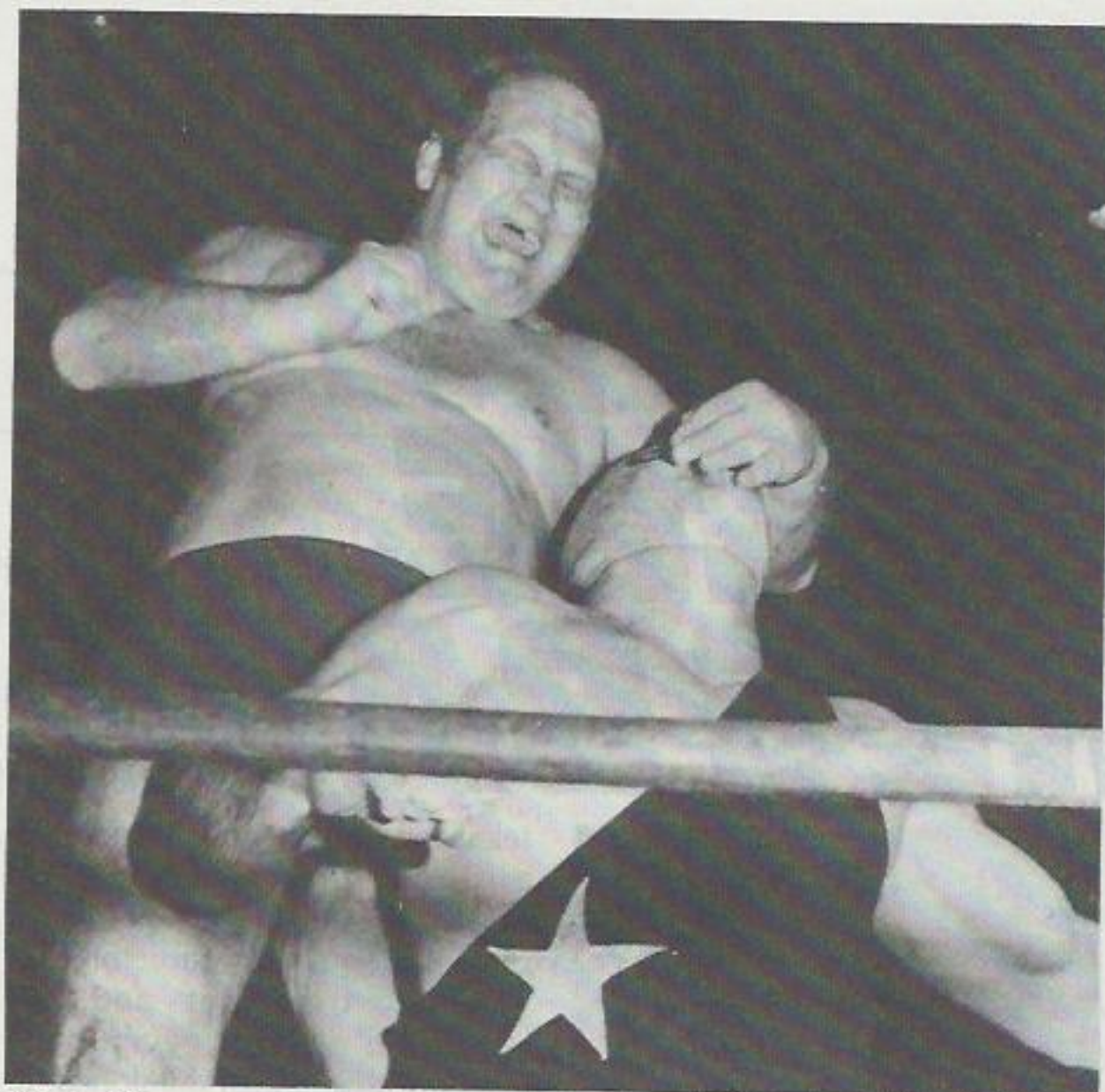
televised interviews, Anderson and Stevens interrupted Superstar's talk. After a while, Superstar grew weary of this insulting treatment and left Anderson's Army, eventually joining forces with Paul Jones. In unison, the Anderson army belittled its former ally and vowed vengeance for his act of betrayal.

Next came the stunning loss of Arab's belt to Rick Steamboat. In a prior tag team match, Snuka and Stevens cruelly injured Jay Youngblood, Steamboat's partner. Again, they appeared to act on Anderson's orders.

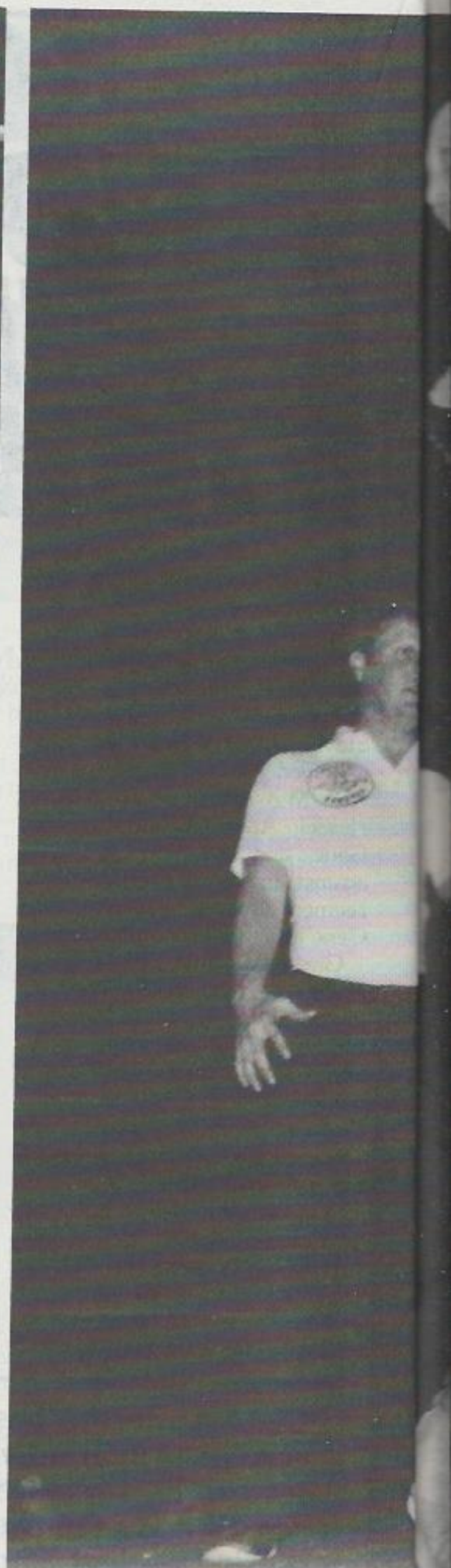
And while Anderson was down in Georgia wrestling, Snuka and Stevens lost their titles to Superstar and Jones.

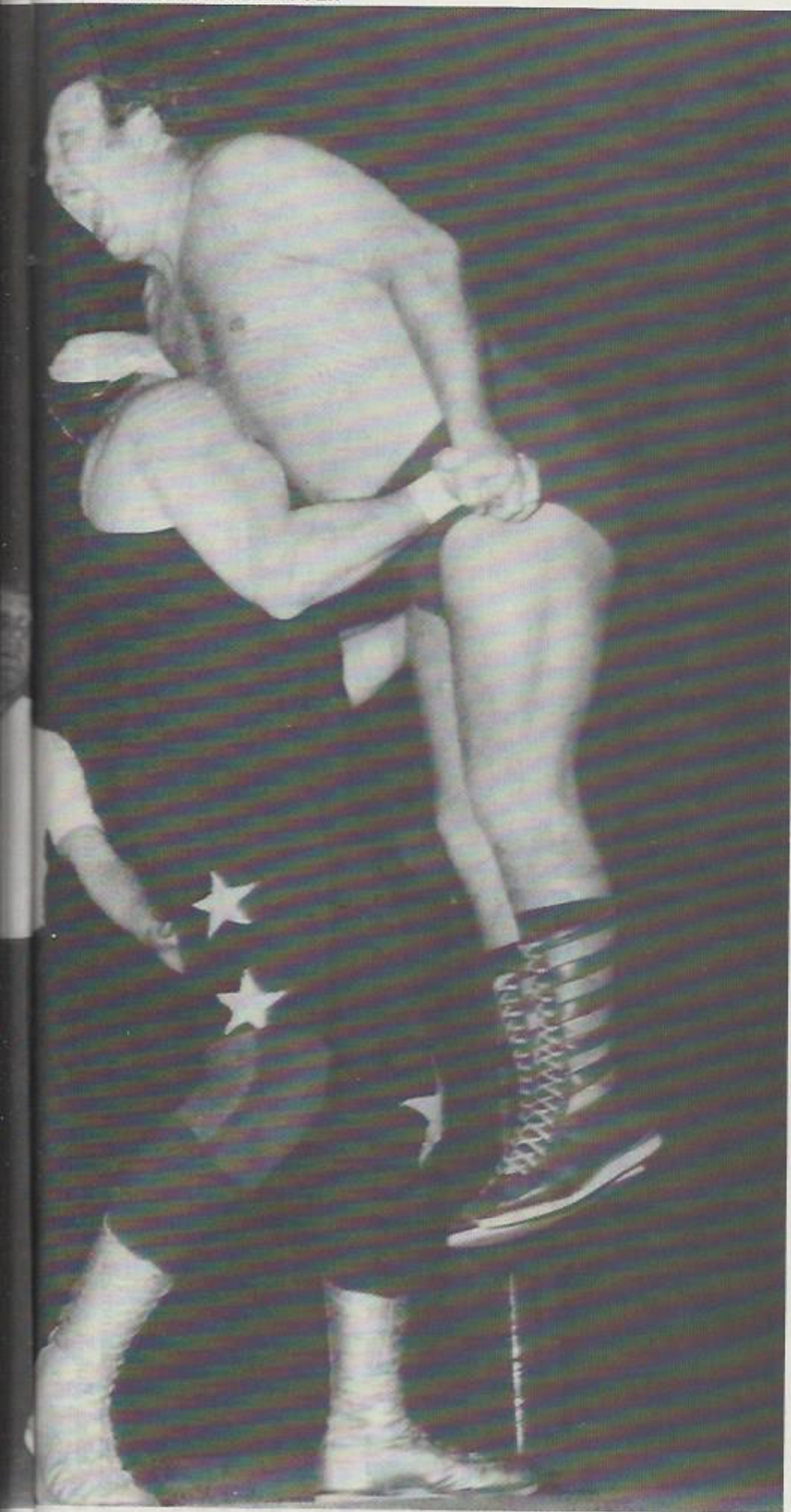
All these incidents are connected. Instead of conducting his empire in a cold, rational manner, Anderson based decisions on emotionality and vengeance. Instead of simply defeating foes, Anderson sought to humiliate them. Passion became

Gene Anderson has spent a great deal of energy creating his empire. Apparently Anderson thought he could rest a little, secure in the strength of his kingdom. But professional wrestling is an unpredictable sport. Now it appears the empire is striking back at Anderson



Masked Superstar decided he had been patient enough with a manager that would not allow him to speak without interruption during television interviews. Anderson pulls back on Superstar's head and aims a fist at his throat (above). Anderson glares at the hostile crowd as he maintains his advantage (below). Superstar uses his awesome strength to lift his former manager into the air by his wrists (right).





his inspiration. And proved to be his downfall.

Let's go back to the original Masked Superstar split. Anderson knew the masked man was a proud grappler. Evidently Superstar didn't pay homage to Anderson's orders and unthinkingly follow his every command. That incensed Anderson. Instead of simply dismissing Masked Superstar, Anderson sought to humiliate him. Instead of simply having a disgruntled former employee running around the Mid-Atlantic, Anderson created an embittered man bent on vengeance. Finally such fiery vengeance found fruition when Jones and Superstar defeated Snuka and Stevens for the tag team championship. Though difficult to prove, perhaps Superstar wouldn't have been quite as determined had he not been full of hatred for Anderson and his men. Just as interesting perhaps.

Next came Hussein Arab's peculiar feud with Ivan Koloff. For a while, they were tag team partners. Then Arab and Koloff started feuding on television. As manager, shouldn't Anderson have sought to find a peaceful solution to this feud instead of allowing Arab's energies to be drained in a senseless feud with a man who shares common rule-breaker philosophies? But Anderson never tried to heal the breach. Reports indicated he only instigated Arab more, re-routing the champion's attention away from his tough contenders toward the Russian. Perhaps as a result, Arab wasn't quite as mentally prepared as he should have been in a match against Rick Steamboat. And that's when he lost the belt to Steamboat, determined to avenge partner Youngblood's injury.

Finally, Anderson's inability to control his massive ego might have cost Snuka and Stevens the belt.

(Continued on page 65)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **WRESTLING** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ENQUIRER

WAR IN MID-ATLANTIC

Koloff and Arab in Brutal Battle

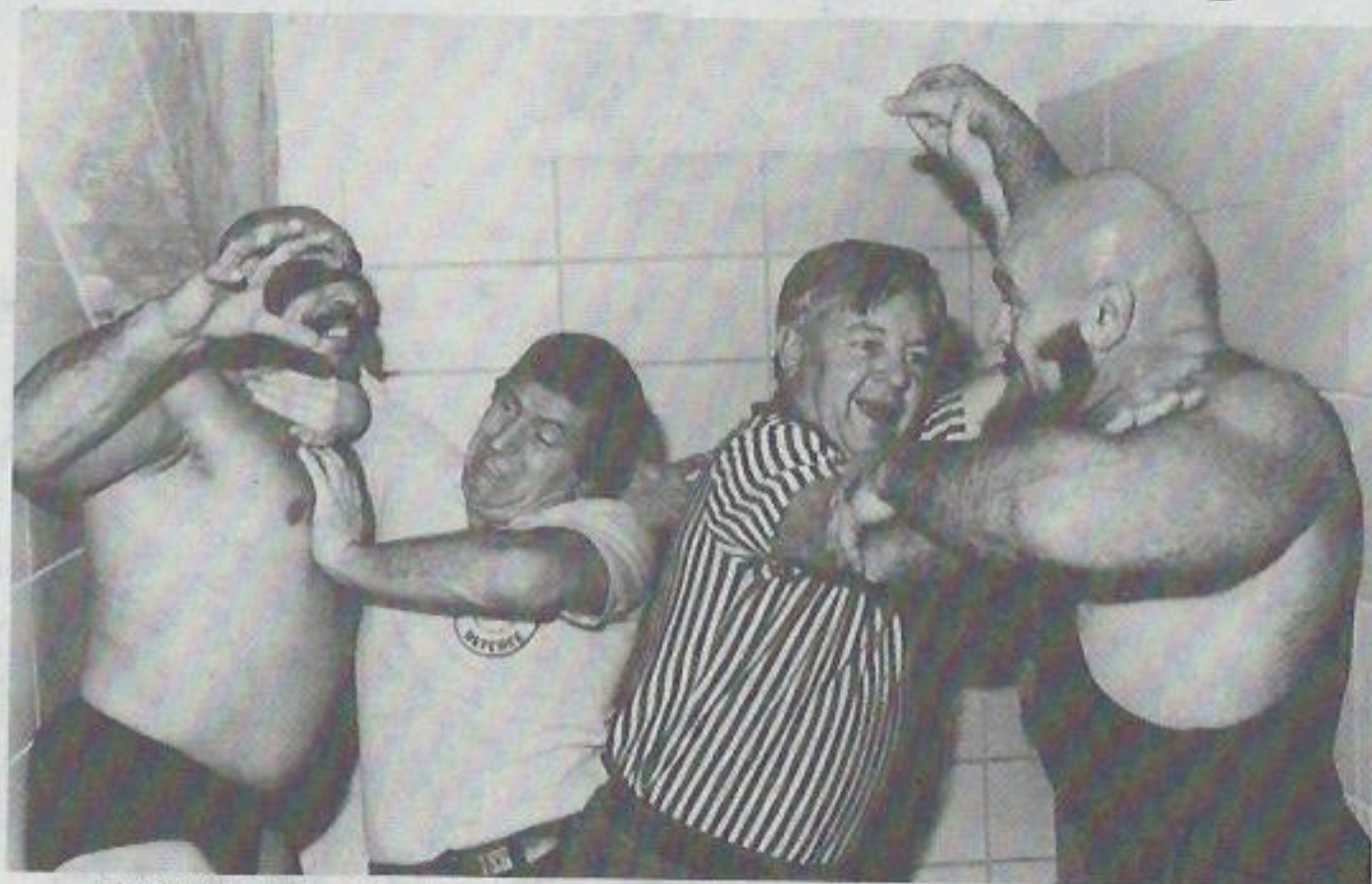
BY STU SAKS

HAMPTON, VA—A state of emergency engulfs the entire Mid-Atlantic area as former Mid-Atlantic champion Hussein Arab and Ivan Koloff go for each other's throats.

NO TRUCE POSSIBLE

When Koloff first entered the area, he and Arab formed a tough tag team. But friction quickly developed as Koloff charged

Arab with holding the team back. A brutal dressing room incident exploded when both men nearly came to blows after a match. Referees Tommy Young and Roughhouse Fargo had to separate the protagonists. Neither man discusses the possibility of peace, instead vowing to destroy the other with "all means available."



TURBULENCE: Hussein Arab and Ivan Koloff nearly come to blows in a Richmond, Virginia, dressing room. Managing Editor Bill Apter happened to be on the scene and snapped the exclusive photograph.

Jaggers and Tyler New Florida Tag Champs

BY PETER KING

ORLANDO, FL—They swagger. They strut. They snarl. They growl. They are hated. But you can't quarrel with success. And whether Florida fans like it or not, Bobby Jaggers and his cousin R.T. Taylor are the new state tag team champions.

If this match is an indication of true behavior, fans may wince every time the new champions wrestle. Jaggers and Tyler committed every illegal act ever practiced within the squared circle, and then some. But they'd deny any wrongdoing in a second.

"We're just so smart and so tough no one knows how to handle us," bragged Jaggers.

Gagne to Japan?

BY MATT BROCK

MINNEAPOLIS, MN—Rumors fly around the twin cities like snowflakes in January. Right now, the heaviest concentration of white snow falls upon a big fat question mark laying across AWA champions Verne Gagne's title. Will the venerable master decide to travel to Japan and defend his title against Shohei Baba? Gagne won't talk. Those closest to Gagne won't talk.

II Returns to Wrestle Saito



TAKE OFF: Mr. Wrestling II undercuts Mr. Saito as his retirement is officially over.

BY STEVEN FARHOOD
ATLANTA, GA—Just a short while ago, Mr. Wrestling II shocked and disheartened millions of fans with his retirement announcement. Tears flowed from one end of America to the other. Bombarded with pleas to return, II made a triumphant entrance back into Georgia wrestling against diabolical Mr. Saito.

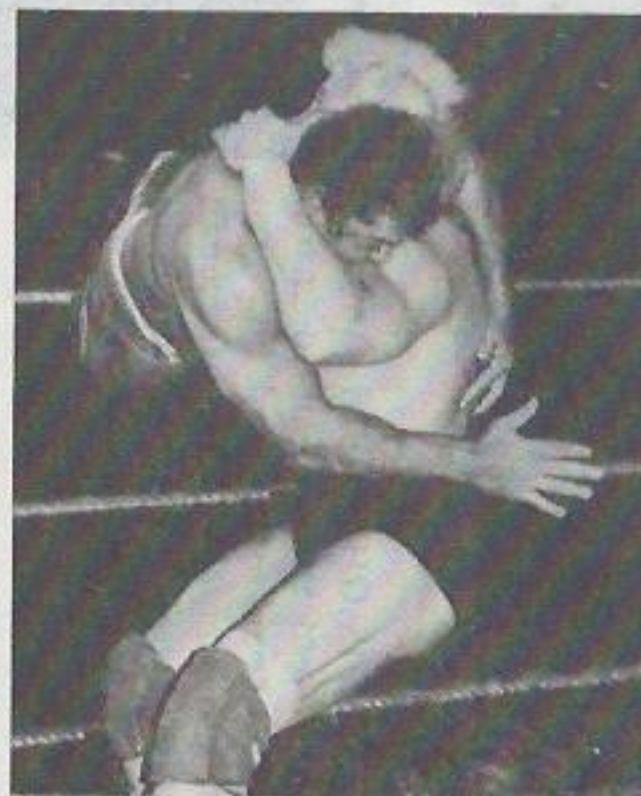
"I don't like being called a coward," said II, explaining why he decided to climb back into the ring against Saito. "Maybe that louse thought he could get away with those kinda remarks, but not against me. All my fans can rest assured I'm here to stay and I'll clean up the state of men like Saito."

Morales Captures In-Con Title

BY BILL APTER

NEW YORK, NY—Controversy raged around the Inter-Continental championship. Ever since Pedro Morales returned to the WWF, he and Ken Patera have feuded. They had wrestled several times before for Patera's belt with each match ending in a Patera disqualification.

This time, Morales finally got the belt in a brutal bout refereed by Pat Patterson. Always the sore loser, a beaten and embittered Patera continued the action after the bell sounded. As Morales held the title aloft, Patera slugged him from behind and then went after Patterson, applying his swinging neckbreaker.



CRASH LANDING: Pedro Morales leaps from the turnbuckles and catches Ken Patera with a flying bodypress to capture the Intercontinental title.

AROUND THE GLOBE

MEMPHIS, TN

Shocking is the only way to aptly describe recent developments in this once tranquil city. First of all,

Tommy Rich has once again endeared himself into the hearts of wrestling spectators by turning to scientific grappling again. Jim Valiant and Tojo Yamamoto, however, are now rulebreakers! Details in a future edition.

ATLANTA, GA

Mr. Wrestling II returned to action after a brief retirement. II explains that he just could not "sit back on his rocking chair" while men like Mr.

Saito and The Freebirds are terrorizing the state. Also big news—state resident Randy Mixon won the Mil Mascaras mask contest.

PITTSBURGH, PA

Bruno Sammartino Jr. made his pro debut against the vicious Baron Scicluna. Experts predict that the young Sammartino has the talent to take him to the top of his profession.

CHARLOTTE, NC

Roddy Piper told fans in the area that they are fools to support Ric Flair. Piper explained that Flair once hated them and he still does. "The guy is a phony through and through," Piper said.

NEW ORLEANS, LA

North American champion Masked Grappler has issued a challenge to Junkyard Dog. This is a twist, a champion challenging a contender.

"I just want to show everyone what a coward he is because I know he will not accept my challenge," said the masked man.

LOOKING AT...

Matt Brock:



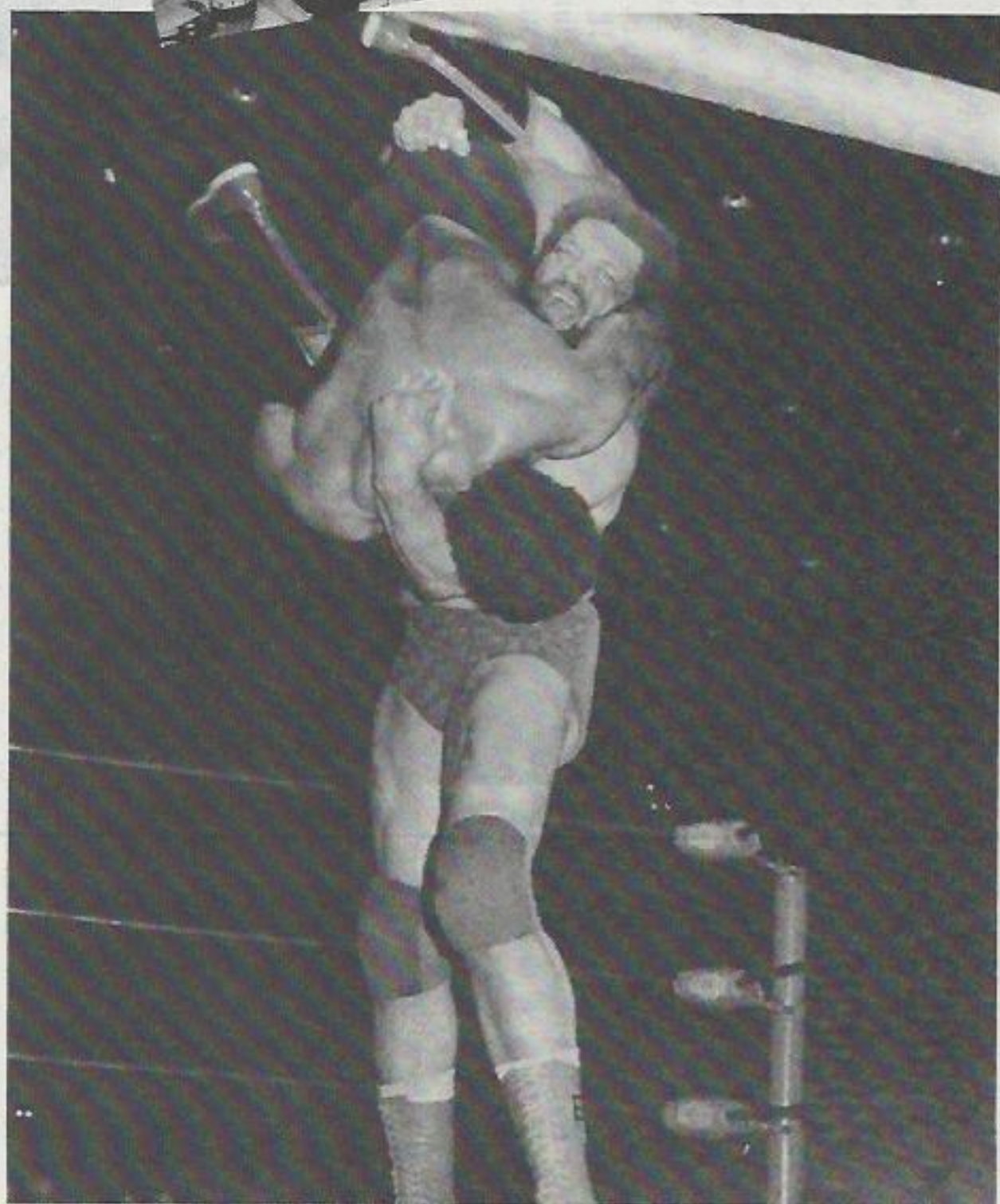
HE IS OH-SO-BIG. And oh-so-mean. And oh-so-smart. If I got paid by the word, I'd give a few more clues. But space is limited, time is at a premium, and I've a date tonight. So I'll say his name is Ernie Ladd.

Certainly Ladd deserves credit for consistency. Over the years, Ladd's cunning cruelty has earned him the justifiable respectful contempt of all wrestling fans. Yet there is far more to this man than mere cruelty.

Ladd has class. Even within the circles of viciousness, Ladd conducts himself with style. Each maneuver conceals a well-planned strategy. Ladd does nothing spontaneously, though it may appear he sometimes does. That is his genius.

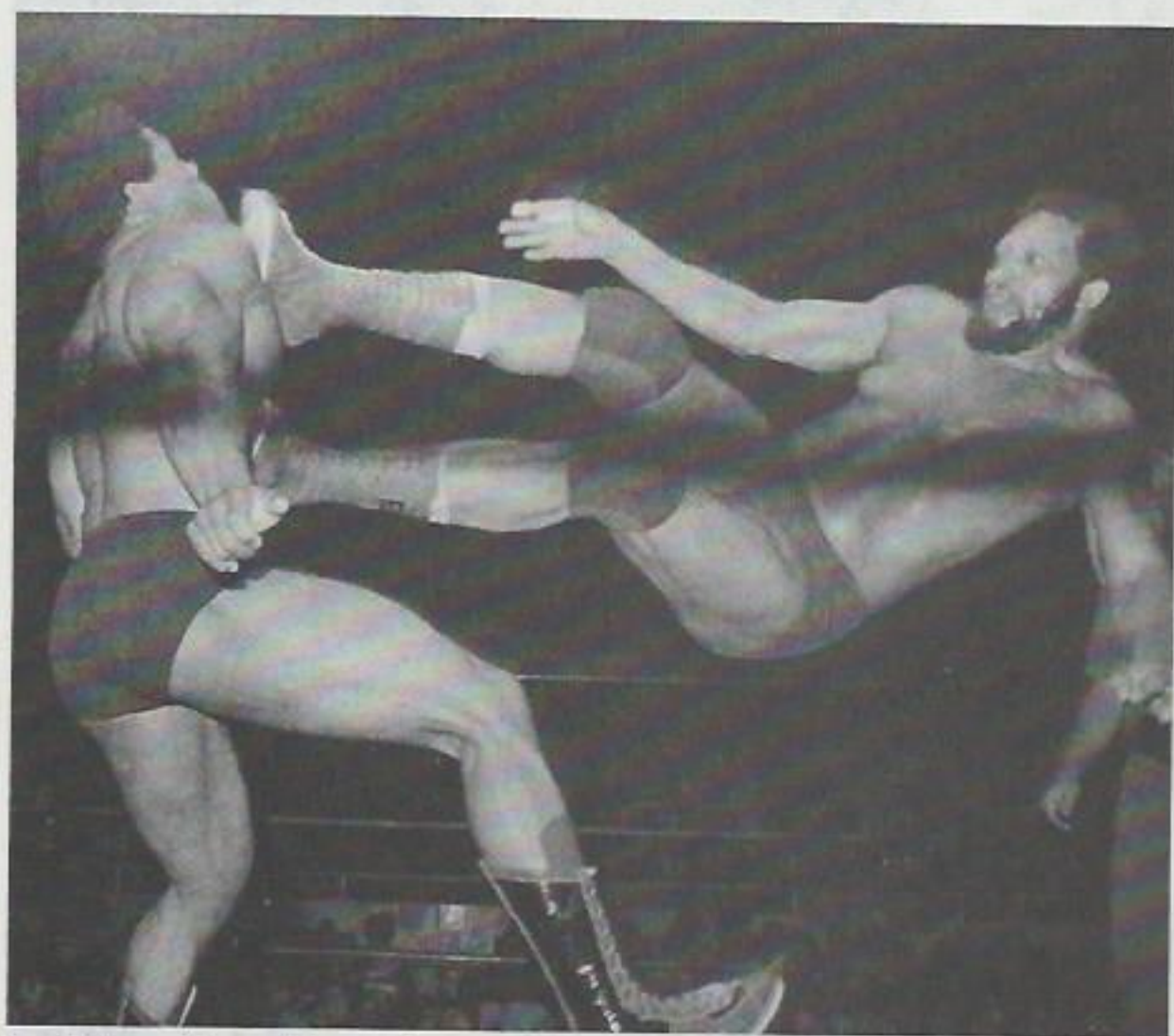
Ladd enters the arena prepared for every possible eventuality. I dare say if an opponent brought an anti-tank gun into the ring, Ladd would have already plotted some shrewd counter-strategy.

Ernie's brilliance might surprise some, but not this old warhorse. Years of battling as an All-Pro defensive lineman for the San Diego Chargers invested Ladd with a deep appreciation of the subtle aspects of violence. Many wrestlers simply unleash assault



Matt Brock considers Ernie Ladd a scientific rulebreaker. Ladd doesn't just rush into situations like a crazed animal. He knows exactly what he is going to do before he gets into the ring. He knows his opponents' weaknesses and how best to exploit them, regardless of the rules.

ERNIE LADD



Ladd stuns Tony Atlas with a dropkick. Few men 6-9 and 320 pounds will ever attempt such a maneuver, and that's what makes Ladd so dangerous. One can never predict what he is going to do next. Like him or not, Ladd will not change his style for anyone, and his success cannot be disputed.

after assault, opting to wear down, intimidate, or even get lucky with some brazen blow.

Not Ladd. He understands the complexities of violence more than any wrestler alive. Ladd understands how a mindless charge can be frustrated by a subtle shifting of the weight. Ladd understands how and where to apply

pressure. Ladd understands how to work on an opponent's vulnerable areas.

Furthermore, Ladd appreciates the psychological aspects of wrestling. Now I'm not talking about the incessant boasting and threats which grow a little tiring to this reporter. I'm talking about a studd scowl. I'm talking about an

unflinching expression.

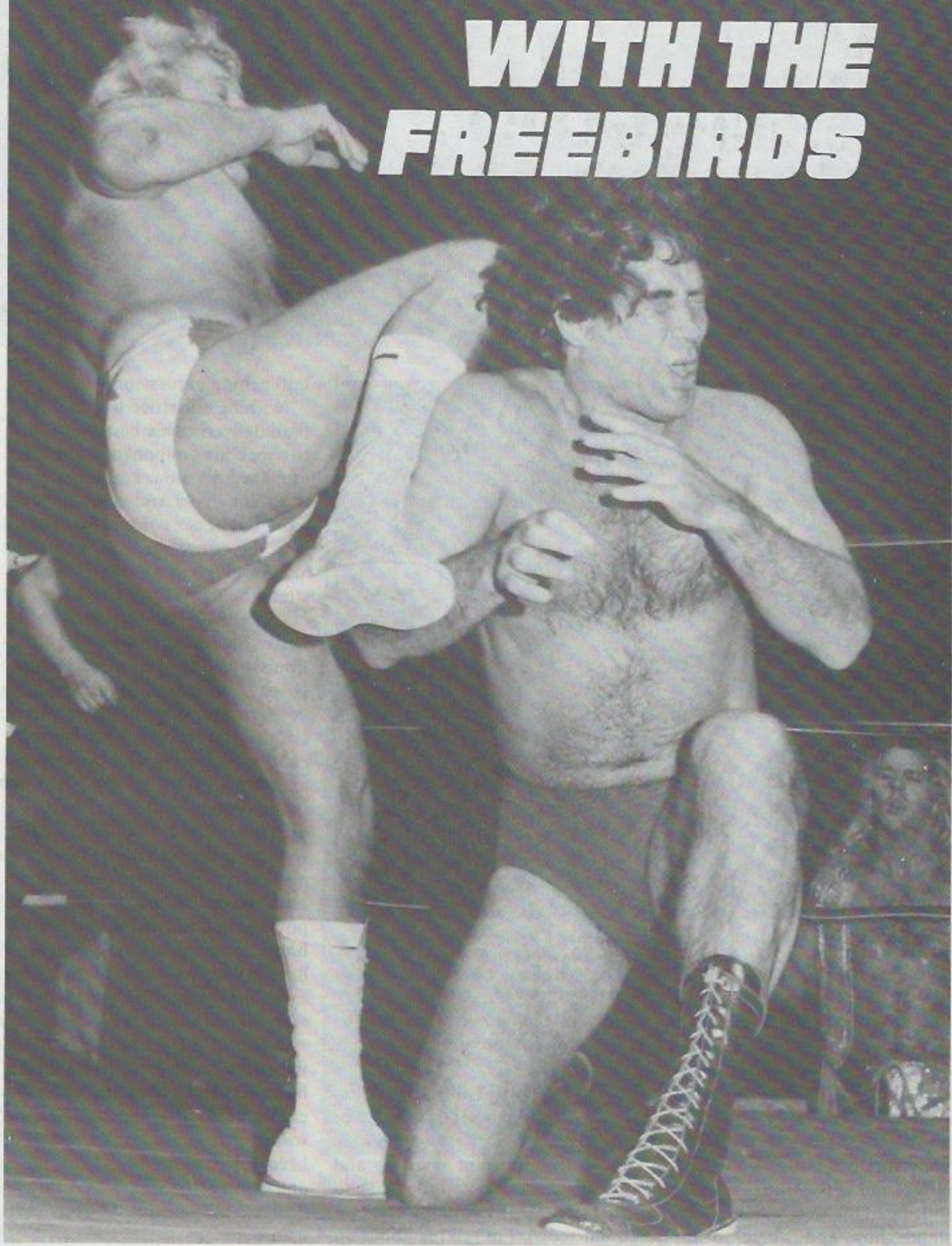
Nothing unsettles a man more than delivering his best blow only to see his opponent snarl in unpaired derision. Ladd mastered this. Not that Ladd is immune to pain. But he can conceal the agony, hide the cringes or wincing which always gives an opponent added strength as he senses the kill.

Currently Ladd teams with Leroy Brown as they defend their Louisiana Tag Team championship. As always, Ladd is vociferously booed. As always, Ladd is the object of considerable contempt and threats from fans and opponents.

But Ladd is used to that. He understands that this is simply the way he must wrestle. This style manifests his deep tendencies. Ladd couldn't be a model of politeness. Ladd could never bring himself to shake an opponent's hand. Ladd doesn't particularly care for the polished nuances of scientific wrestling.

What Ladd does very well is wrestle according to his style. He has refused change, despite considerable pressures. And no fan will ever find his loyalty to Ladd betrayed. Ladd is what he is, pure and simple. As much as I might dislike his tactics, he is his own man. □

THE BRISCOS' WAR WITH THE FREEBIRDS



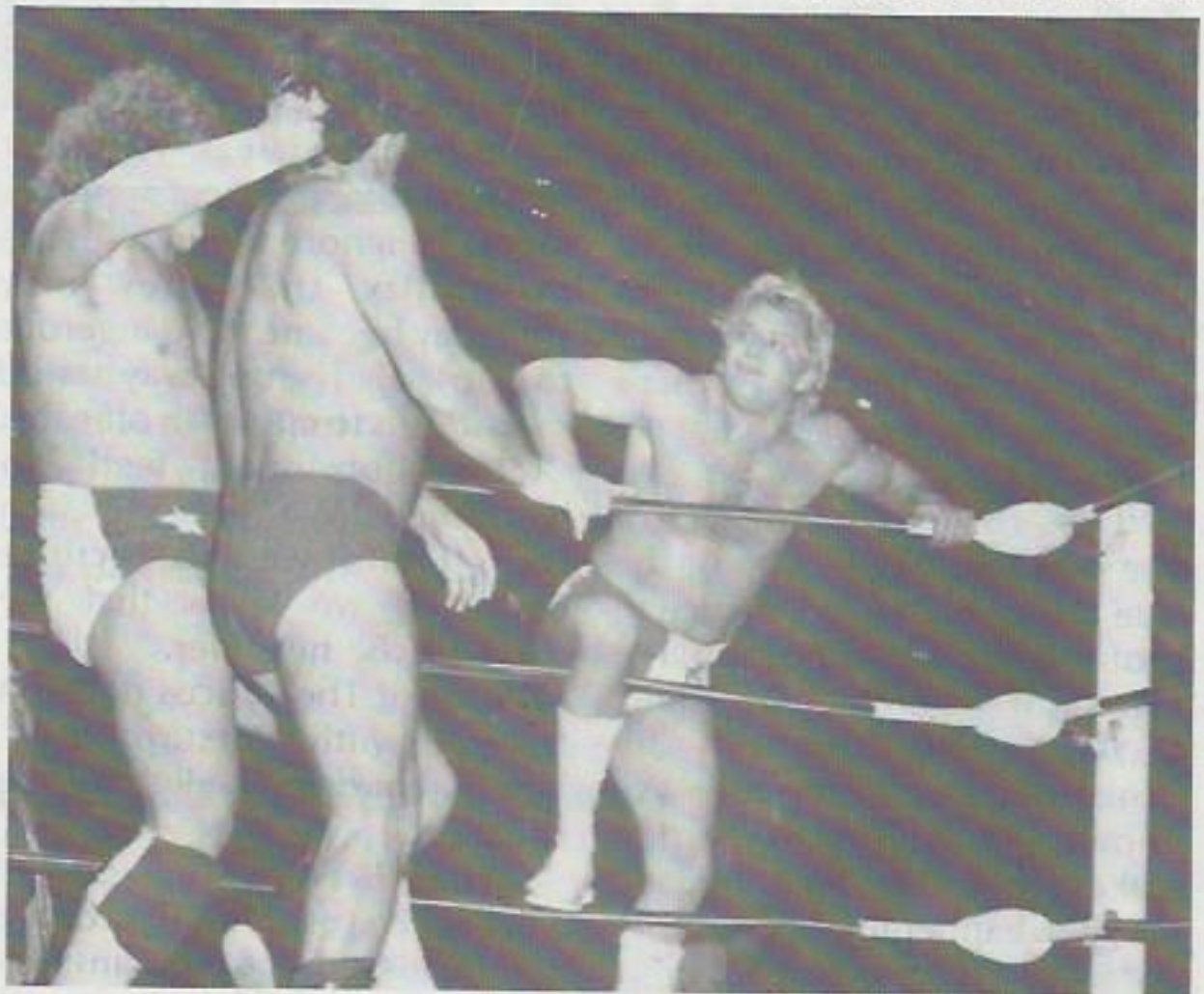
AS HAS BEEN their custom since they started professional wrestling, Jack and Jerry Brisco hold an open house for fans from all across the nation every Thursday morning. Jack, something of an amateur gourmet chef, whips up a huge brunch for all who wish to come in, meet the Briscos and discuss wrestling.

Usually the climate is one of joy and fellowship. However, a recent brunch meeting took on all the trappings of a wake.

"I tell you, Jack, this is terrible what those nuts are doing up in Georgia," said Jason Templar. "Those Freebirds are maniacs. Not only are they maniacs, they're dangerous maniacs."

Jack and Jerry hunched forward intently.

"Something has to be done," insisted Wendy Wiley. "They



At their fans' request, the Briscos traveled to Georgia to stop the rampaging Freebirds. They were somewhat surprised at the ferocity of the Georgia tag team champions. Above: Terry Gordy directs Jack Brisco into Buddy Roberts' knee.

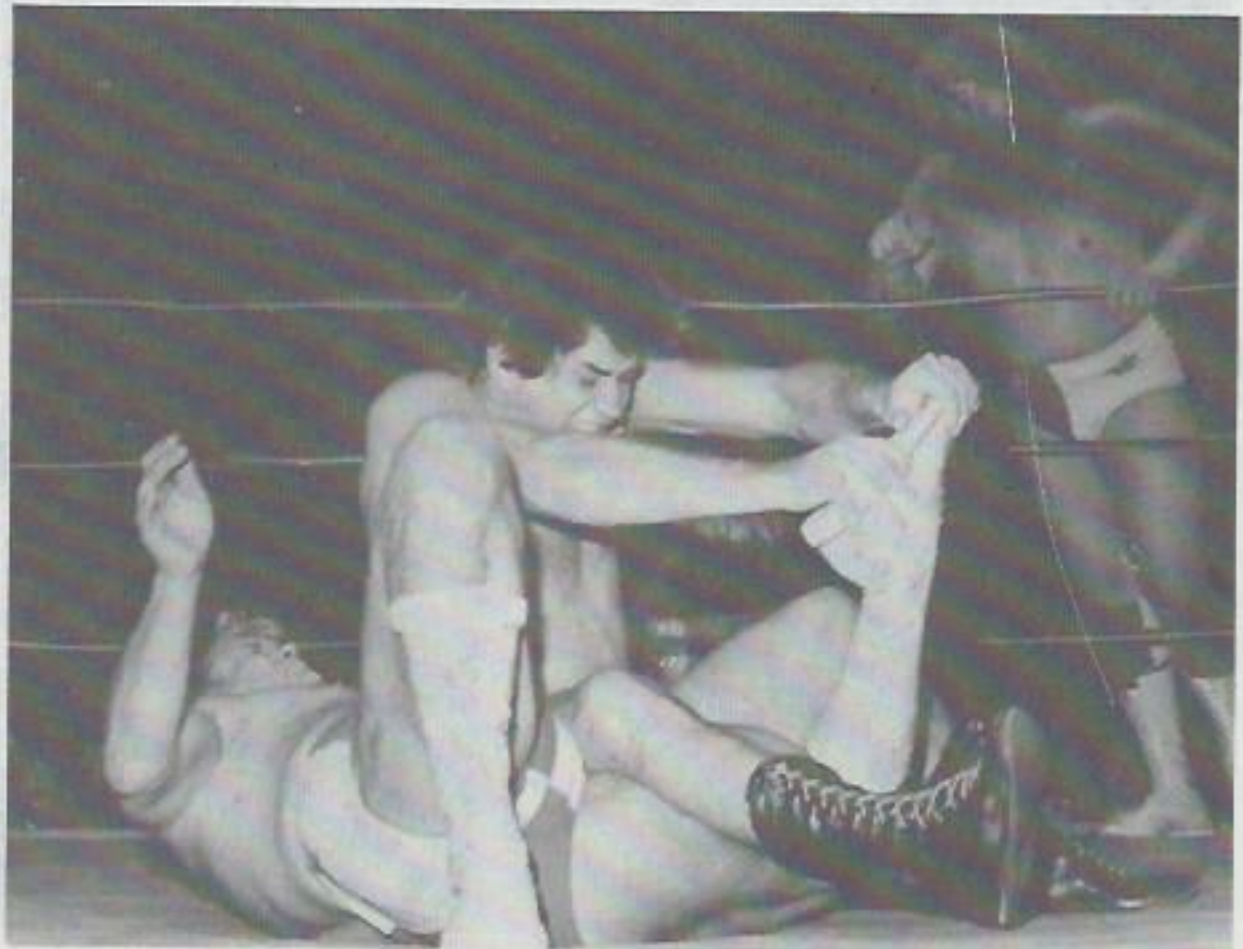
For some time now, The Fabulous Freebirds have run roughshod over Georgia foes. Their bizarre blend of antics, cruelty, and utter unpredictability bewilder many. Now from Florida come Jack and Jerry Brisco. These brothers combine a shrewdness and talent which might prove too much for The Freebirds

can't get away with this. They have to be stopped. I know it's not fair to ask you nice boys to travel away from Florida and stop them, but you have to do something."

The Briscos exchanged concerned glances.

"Please," whispered Fran Kensington, "we don't want to ask you to put yourselves in danger, because going up to meet The Freebirds is a dangerous mission. But you must consider doing something. Please, Georgia wrestling is in serious trouble."

The Briscos have made their reputation on dedication to the sport and their fans. They abhor anyone who tries to ruin pro wrestling. And despite the obvious dangers, the Briscos



Jerry Brisco twists Roberts' leg around his own as Gordy looks for an opportunity to enter the ring and free his partner. The Freebirds completely underestimated the Briscos' ability.

decided, very quickly, to go north and take on The Fabulous Freebirds.

"We can't let those bums ruin wrestling," said Jack. "I don't care how far we have to travel or what possible perils we might face. We have an obligation to our fans and the sport that's been so good to us and that we love so dearly.

"If we ignored the menace of The Freebirds, we wouldn't be true to our oath of allegiance to professional wrestling and the ideals of scientific wrestling. Okay, so The Freebirds are dangerously unpredictable. We understand that. But we had to make a choice. Do we shrug and say it's happening in another state and turn our backs?

"No," Jack said emphatically.

"If we allow The Freebirds to run amuck in Georgia, what's to stop them from thinking they can travel to other areas. We don't believe in the policy of appeasement. To ignore them raises the possibility that they may someday become too dangerous to ever stop. The only way to stop monsters is to cut them off early.

"They obviously feed on bloodshed. We have to stop them. Even if we must sacrifice ourselves, we know that the sport will be healthier."

Word of The Briscos decision traveled swiftly. Not surprisingly. The Freebirds made light of the situation.

"The Briscos?" laughed Michael Hayes. "The Briscos are comin' to Georgia. Well lah-dee-dad, I'm so scared my knees are

shakin' together."

"Man, The Freebirds are way too good to wrestle guys who don't even deserve prelim bouts," said Terry Gordy. "Let 'em come up if they want. We can always use a two-minute workout."

"Who? What you say their name was?" Buddy Roberts titled his head in exaggerated bewilderment. "I thought they'd already retired. Ain't they a mite old to be wrestlin'. I think there should be some kinda law against senior citizens gettin' into the ring with young, strong guys like us and gettin' hurt. You know, I don't want the death of an old man on my conscience."

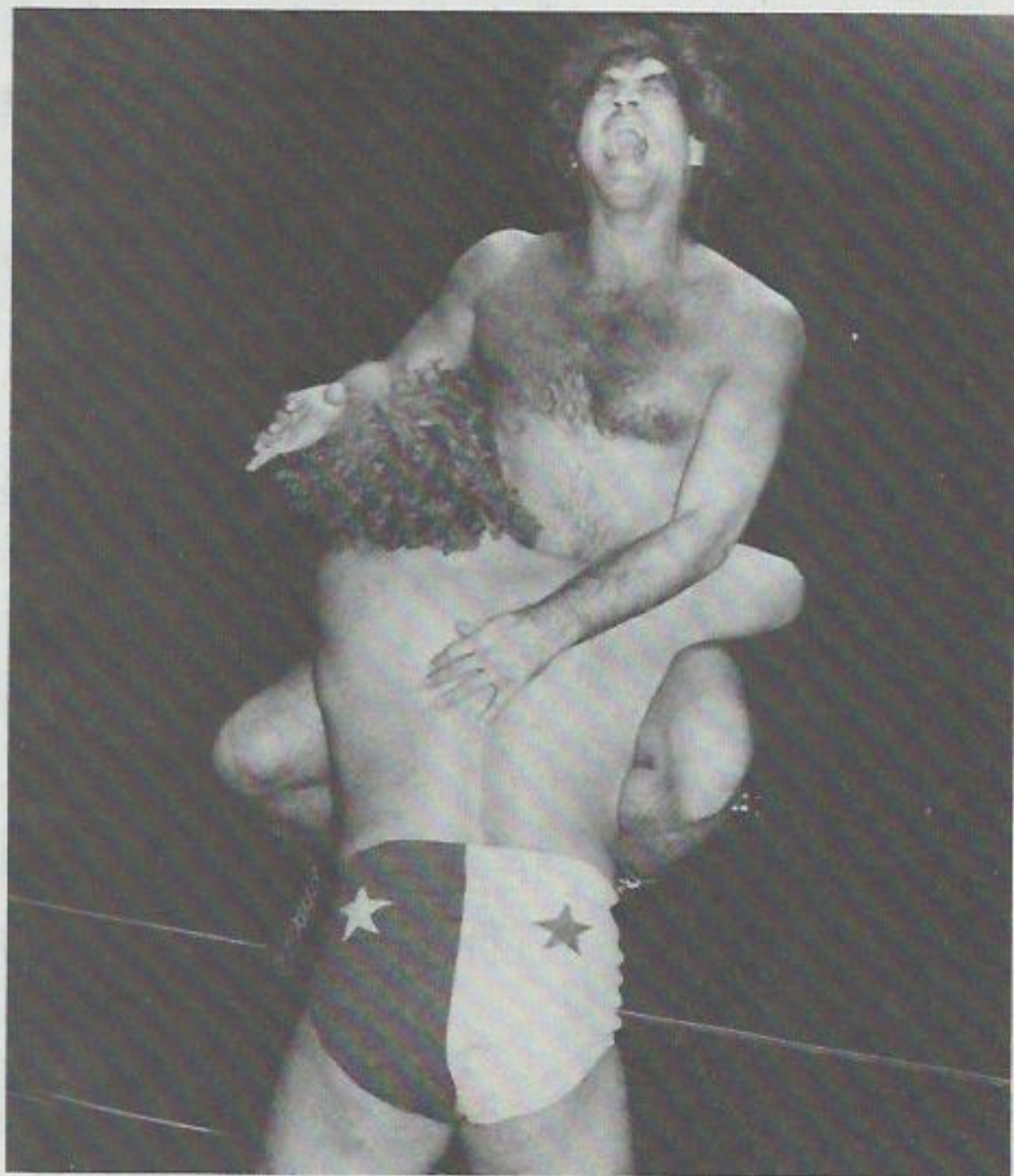
Both Jack and Jerry brushed off the reaction with grim disgust.

"They can say whatever they want," said Jerry. "Doesn't matter to us. Who cares what they say? We've been in this sport a while now and one thing we've learned is never to pay any mind to what someone says before the match. You learn really quickly that the guys with the biggest mouths usually have the least guts when the bell sounds."

Well, both The Briscos and The Fabulous Freebirds underestimated their foes. This match was an absolute brawl. Jack and Jerry wrestled as if the very future of Georgia wrestling rested on their broad shoulders, which it might. Gordy and Roberts (with Hayes advising at ringside) wrestled like the unscrupulous maniacs all professional wrestling has grown to despise.

When it was over, Jack Brisco leaned back in his stool and wiped the rivers of sweat from his handsome face.

"I got a feelin' those crazy birds won't be thinkin' too hard about goin' down to Florida for quite some while." And then he smiled. □



Gordy's powerful bearhug has Jack crying out in agony. Though Jack and Jerry failed to wrestle away The Freebirds' tag team titles, they did enough damage to insure that they won't be invading Florida.

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

(Continued from Page 29)

ANDRE THE GIANT

"I don't think I've ever been really satisfied. Every match had something wrong, some mistake I made. What keeps me going in the dream of the perfect match, one in which I do everything right. Of course, after that, I'll retire. What can you do after wrestling the perfect match?"



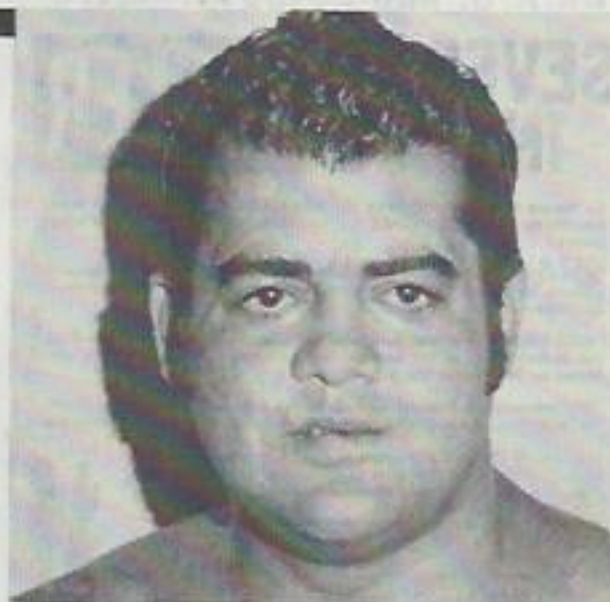
DICK SLATER

"A lot of guys in wrestling don't trust me. I guess that's understandable. I can't seem to stay friends with anybody too long. But when any guy says he doesn't trust me, I laugh. To hell with him. Wrestling is one man against the world. If he hasn't learned that yet, trusting or not trusting me won't help him."



PEDRO MORALES

"You'd be amazed how many people think the best years of my life were when I was WWF champion. They keep thinking I'm now just moping around, trying to get back my former glory. That's stupid. I'm wrestling better now than I ever have. Each match is exciting. One thing I did learn is that a title belt isn't the most important thing in the world. I could never win a title again and still consider my career a success."



RAY STEVENS

"I've pretty much gone everywhere and seen everything. I've won a slew of titles and made a small fortune. Most athletes would say that's enough. Hell, I can't ever get enough. There's always someone else I want to beat. I'll retire only when everyone else admits I drove them out of wrestling."





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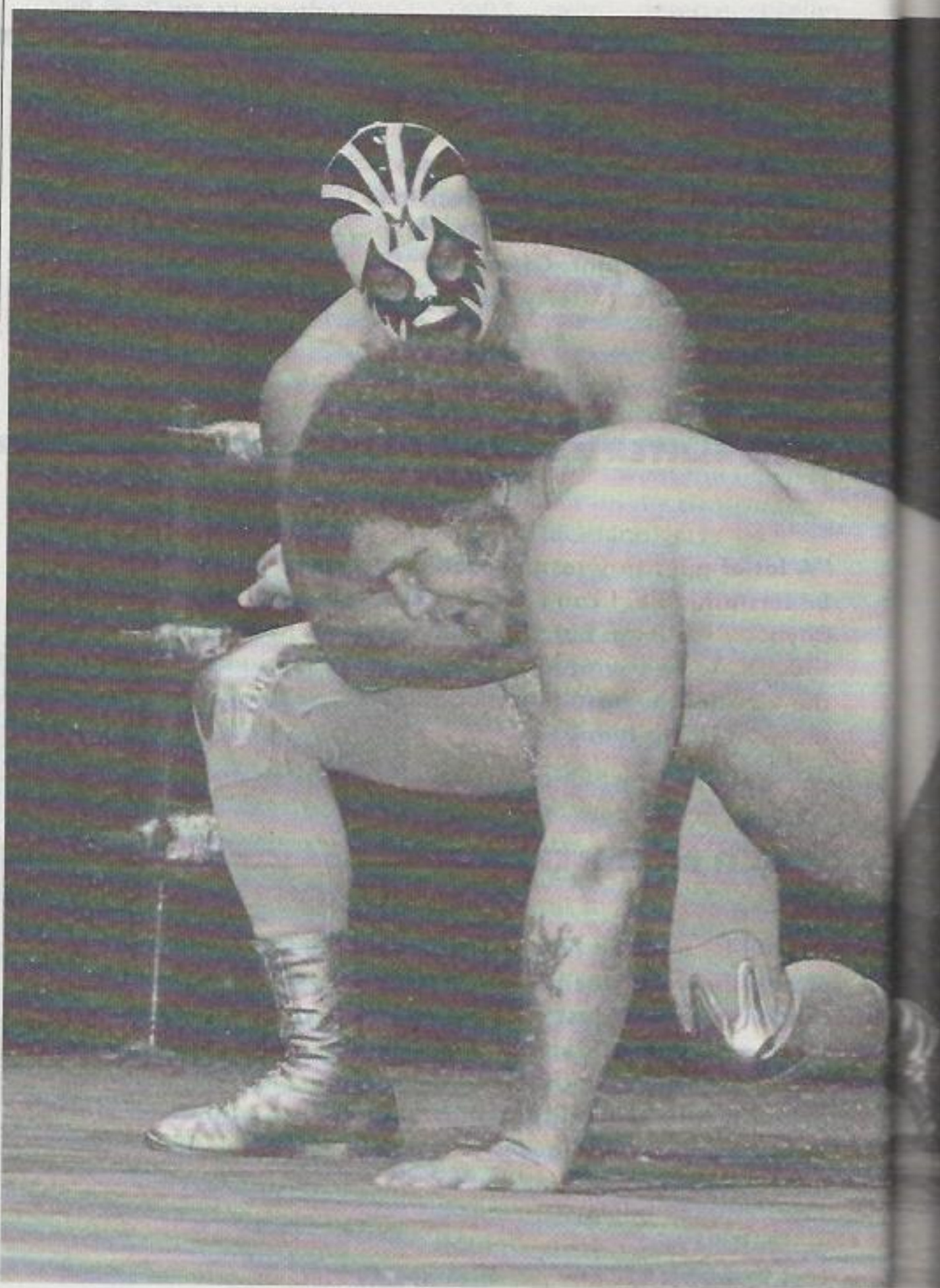
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KING'S COURT

(Continued from Page 6)



important to show you can reach the top with your God-given talent. I sometimes wonder if this message is clear to the younger generation. Randy's composition showed me it is."

When contacted by a member of our staff, young Randy was nearly speechless at being told he had won one of Mil's masks. "Oh man, for real?" he exclaimed. When told it was indeed for real, he

said, "I think it's an honor to have it, because he's the greatest there is." Mil felt likewise about your composition, Randy. Congratulations from all of us at PW!

The response was so great to this year's contest, Mil has decided to award runner-up prizes of an autographed picture to the five next-best compositions. The

Mascaras, whom Randy Mixon says stands for "achievement," works on the arm of Harley Race.

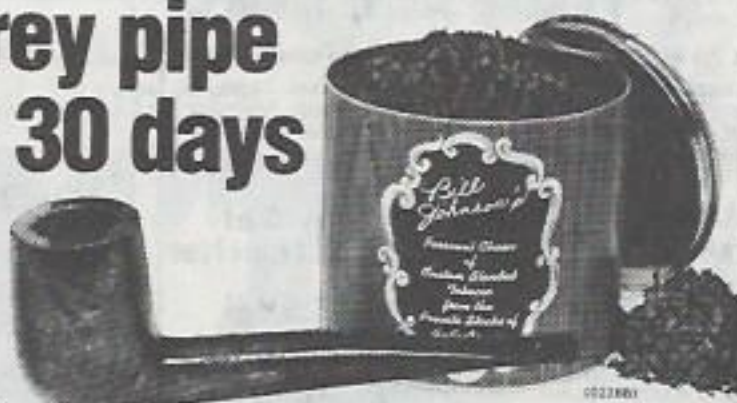


runner-up winners are: Kent Stewart, South Point, Ohio; Mike Raulerson, St. Petersburg, Florida; John Boles, Spring City, Tennessee; Jeff Tomlins, Wappingers Falls, New York; and JoAnn McMillan, Tacoma, Washington.

Once again, Mil Mascaras and the editors of *PWI* wish to thank everyone who entered this year's contest. □

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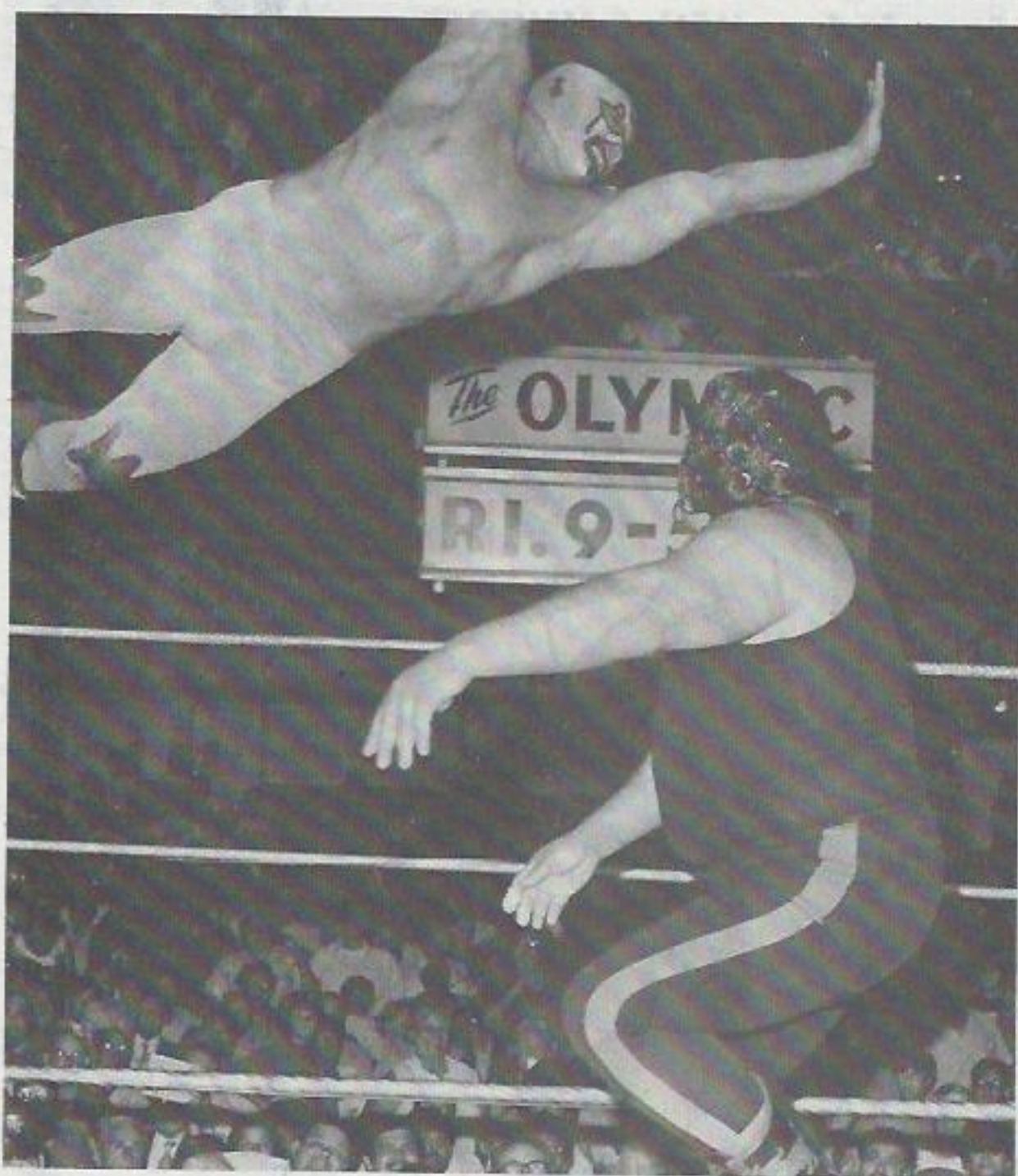
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(Continued from Page 10)



Mascaras is not in the ring to punish an opponent; he is in there to win. He would prefer to stun an opponent by flying off the turnbuckles (against Bull Ramos above and Harley Race below) than beat him to the point of defenselessness. Mil, however, feels restricted by the example he must set.

Mascaras was called for the next bout. He waved to his gathering and galloped to the ring. His young admirers rushed to ringside to witness his match. Mascaras knew they would be there.

"It's an unbelievable honor, don't get me wrong," Mascaras said as he towed himself off after another hard-fought victory. "You can't imagine the feeling of being held in such regard. When you look at the trends in this sport, you can almost get sick. It seems to me that a vast majority of the top young wrestlers don't give a hoot about the science of their sport. Instead of taking the time to learn an honest approach, they would



rather learn how to deceive the referees and get away with as much as they can. I want to set an example for the young wrestlers. I'm obligated to."

Mil's voice was almost apologetic. Even though he could well be the most revered wrestler in the world at such a young age, he seems bothered.

"I don't want to say bothered," Mil said. "Let's just say restricted. Yeah, restricted is a better word."

"By now, you know my basic philosophy of the sport," Mil explained. "I'd rather dropkick an opponent to the mat than lay him out with a punch. I'd rather fly off the turnbuckle with a quick pin than make my opponent suffer in the ring. But there comes a time when the only way you can handle some of these guys is to get rough with them."

"Then I catch a glimpse of a Rick Martel in the stands, or a Sweet Brown Sugar, or a Chavo Guerrero, and I think of guys like Tommy Rich or Larry Zbyszko. You know, there's that fine line between what makes a man decide to be a scientific wrestler or a rulebreaker. Anyway, I consider all this when I see those young faces and then I think twice about doing what I know I have to. They're so impressionable at that age."

Mascaras' concern is commendable. He has earned the trust of the young scientific wrestlers and he recognizes this. But he should also recognize that in order to set a true example, he must be himself. If an occasional rough-house move is necessary, there should be no hesitation on his part. To maintain his status in the young wrestlers' eyes, he must constantly show that a good man has a chance to be successful. If he gives away any advantage, the results could be more devastating than a loss for Mil Mascaras. □

ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from Page 12)

"You mean to tell me these, these creatures can read?" I asked.

Albano hadn't heard me. He had released Rex's leash from the fender and was walking into the unpaved section of the lot.

"You know we were up till five in the morning watching old Lassie movies," the Captain shouted back to me as Rex, on all fours, led him on. "And the boys drank a lot of ginger ale, so they're really anxious to relieve themselves, if ya know what I mean."

Ginger ale? Relieve themselves? I didn't want to know any more. My head felt like it was going to burst. Out of the corner of my eye I saw King in the back seat. He was reading a book! A closer look revealed his literary selection: *The Complete Works of Rin Tin Tin*. It was too much for me. I began to panic. What was the meaning of this? What would Brock say?

Albano and Rex returned. There were gobs of drool on the Captain's pants leg. It was all I needed to see.

"Lou, I'm really not feeling too well," I said, putting on my most-pathetic-looking face. "I know we were going to spend the day together, but I don't think I'm up to it. And besides, my mother's not feeling too well, and . . ."

Albano got the message.

"Okay Farhood, no need for a long-winded excuse. There's a train heading back in 10 minutes."

I was ever-so-grateful for the release. I ran to the platform, bought my ticket, and took a deep breath of relief.

On the ride back, I tried to put things into perspective. Were the Moondogs really like this? Or had Albano set them up to scare me? Maybe I'll never know. Maybe I don't want to. □

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RINGSIDE

(Continued from Page 8)

my days of combat are all behind me now."

Kevin Sullivan has shocked the entire sport with his decision to turn rulebreaker. "I'm more interested in making money and winning titles than having fans," Sullivan said.

"Hulk Hogan is back from Japan and once again he is campaigning to get a title match with WWF champion Bob Backlund. The question we have is why Fred Blassie was able to secure a title match for Killer Khan in a relatively short period of time while Hogan has yet to get his shot.

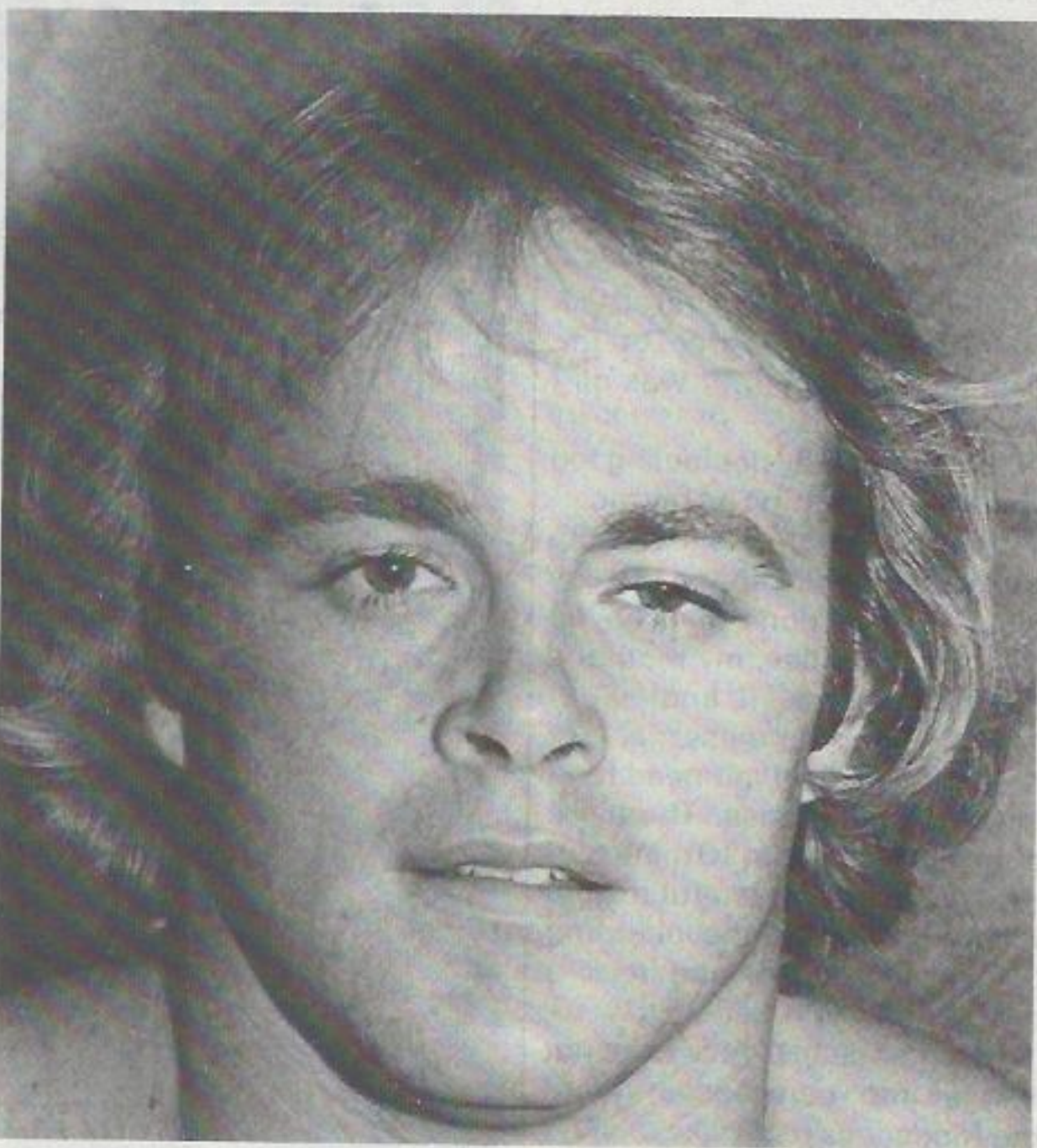
The tag team of Hussein Arab and Ivan Koloff is a thing of the past. Following a brutal dressing room brawl, the two are

demanding to wrestle one another to prove who is superior.

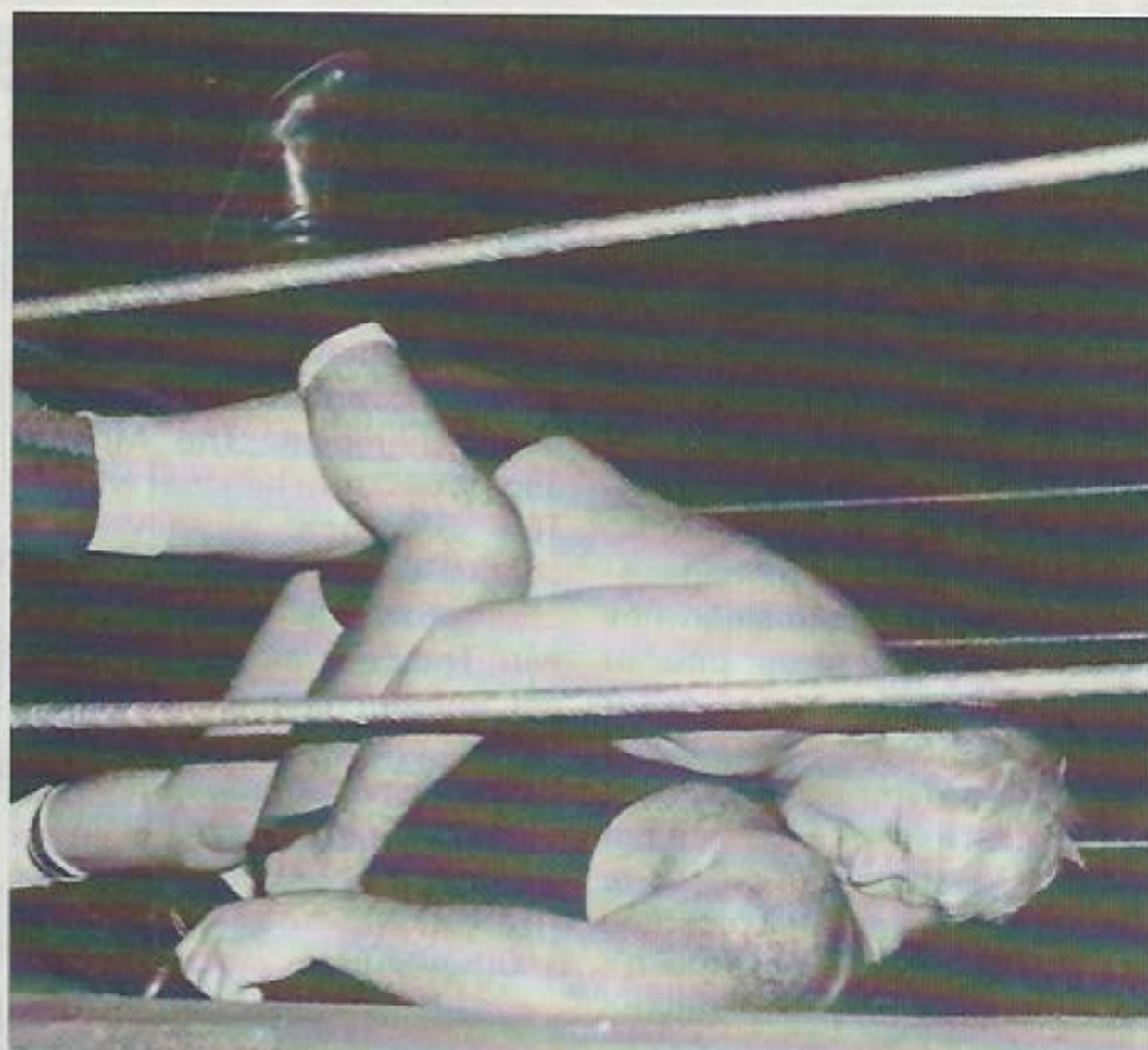
Gino Hernandez must really regret that he called Fritz Von Erich a "has-been." After the thrashing Fritz handed Gino, the young man curbs his tongue a bit whenever Fritz' name comes up.

Dewey Robertson has entered the Florida mat scene along with two very unusual grapplers, Superfly #1 and Assassin #3 ... Speaking of unusual, Texas fans are mystified by the appearance of a man calling himself "The Monk." He is a very tough individual and rumor has it that he is also licensed as a professional boxer in some states.

Dick Murdoch and Dusty Rhodes, former friends and tag



Feeling that being a fan favorite has limited his success, Kevin Sullivan has turned rulebreaker. Another one bites the dust!



The rulebook no longer guides the career of Dick Murdoch; the checkbook does. Murdoch pins a foe using the ropes for added leverage. And as long as Lord Al Hays comes up with the bucks, he sees nothing wrong with deserting his fans and old friends.

team partners, are about to wrestle each other in the feud of the century.

"I never thought Dick could stoop so low to attack Barry Windham and go to work for that theivin' Lord Al Hays," Dusty said. "All he is interested in is money. I can't believe he sold out—I can't believe it."

Murdoch says that as long as Hays' checkbook is around, he will be around to do any dirty deeds the "good" Hays wants him to do.

Prompted by letters begging him to stop the rash of rulebreakers in the East, Ivan Putski has returned to the WWF. "At every arena I went to in Texas, the promoter would call me into the office and give me a load of letters sent by fans in the WWF area. They all asked me to come back. Well, 'Polish Power' is back and I'll fight for my fans till I die."

That's all for now. See you next time! □



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MORGENSTEIN REPORT

(Continued from Page 18)

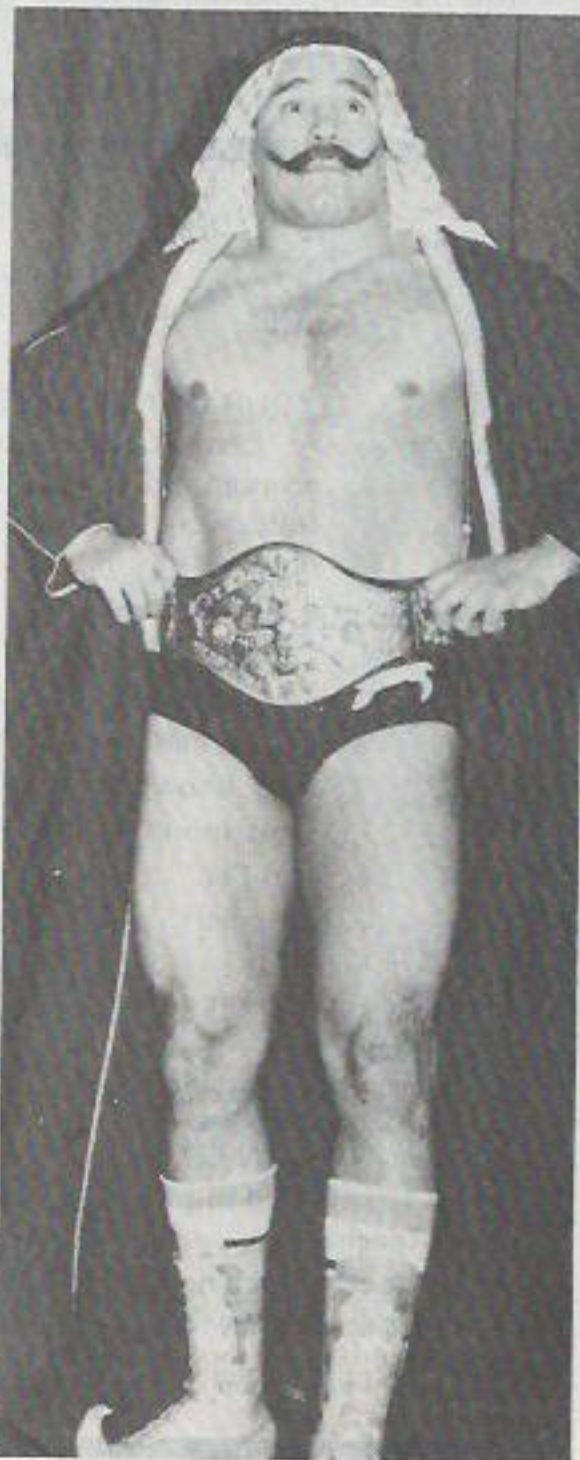
ALBANO OUTSMARTS HIMSELF

Even geniuses can get caught up in the convoluted machinery of their own minds. I think that's happened to Captain Lou Albano. Without any dispute from their quarter, Albano's record as manager of eight WWF tag teams elevates him to a niche as one of wrestling's all-time great managers. But Albano's greed for even greater success might have cost him the services of The Samoans. From what I've learned, Afa and Sika resented the introduction of The Moondogs. Obviously Albano

already had the Samoans' title to add to his credentials. But now he wanted another tag team champion. The Moondogs would give him that which The Samoans already expended considerable pain and effort towards. Why bother with The Samoans if you could get another champion? What Albano miscalculated was The Moondogs' skills. I predict they'll fade into insane eclipse and Albano will be searching the high seas for yet another pair.

A LESSON FOR ARAB

I really shouldn't feel much sympathy for Hussein Arab. After all, the man's past behavior doesn't warrant the slightest shred of concern. He's never displayed any concern for the helpless opponents he tortures long after the bell has rung. He's never displayed the slightest bit of loyalty to friends nor the barest outlines of courtesy to fans. But maybe Arab learned a valuable lesson in his recent split with former tag team partner Ivan Koloff. Koloff unceremoniously dumped Arab when the Iranian no longer served the Russian's purposes. Koloff demonstrated no loyalty to Arab. Yet Arab complains loudly and expects a sympathetic audience. No way. Perhaps this betrayal will impress upon Hussein his own vast shortcomings. Perhaps a slow realization will penetrate that muscular figure that his path, quite similar to Koloff's, isn't the right path.



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RHODES

(Continued from Page 28)

been the greatest of us all. He should be NWA champion now. He should have been holding the belt for years. Instead, he gets elected to fan awards like "most popular wrestler." He deserves better than that. No, that's wrong. He doesn't deserve it. He should earn better than that.



A week-long reign as NWA champion is not enough for a wrestler the quality of Dusty Rhodes. Though he has had an outstanding career, we hope his best days are ahead.

"The history books will write Dusty was perhaps the greatest sports personality of his era. They should be able to write more. 'People's Champion' is nice, but the only real championship is the one earned in the ring.

"Somewhere along the line, Dusty Rhodes got sidetracked. I don't know if he can ever get on the championship track again."

We don't know, either. But we, along with Mr. Wrestling II and Dusty's other admirers, hope the best for the man is yet to come. □

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BRUNO

(Continued from Page 34)



As the battle moves outside the ring, Slaughter aims a right at Sammartino's head. Bruno ducked and Slaughter's hand crashed into the ringpost.

nightly wrestling wars.

"I don't have any first-hand information," our source said. "But Arnold worries about Bob. You see, Backlund is such a fiery competitor he couldn't stand the thought of not completely finishing off and demolishing Slaughter and Patera and anyone else contending for his title. So Skoaland might have passed the word to Bruno to take on these guys, give Backlund a little time to regroup and come back fresher than ever. Again, I have no first-hand knowledge, but I know all these guys and that could be the sort of decent act Skoaland would do."

So this might be the kind of story impossible to verify. Skoaland would never talk. Sammartino will continue to deny. Backlund's pride wouldn't allow him to confess the plan. But the hard physical evidence points to this startling conclusion: Sammartino is Backlund's bodyguard. ☐

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MIL MASCARAS

(Continued from Page 31)

introductions. His total attention was on the man across the mat. He stared at Mil Mascaras with an intensity that was terrifying.

Mil returned his stare. He was ready for the toughest, dirtiest match of his life. He knew Baker's reputation, had seen the man wrestle, was sure of what to expect. Then came the bell and all expectations flew out the window.

Baker was magnificent. From the very first, he used scientific moves with a grace and genius that was staggering. Mil's flying tactics were neutralized by Baker's skill. It was a superb exhibition of wrestling virtuosity.

At first, Mil couldn't believe it. Baker wasn't using any of his illegal tactics. Then, through the special unspoken understanding enjoyed by athletes, Mil realized what was happening. And he responded in kind.

Mil gave Baker the scientific match of his life. The two men combined strength, skill, and speed in a superb match. Mil went against Baker's strength, forcing the huge grappler to his ultimate potential. Though it was a tough, bruising battle, it became obvious the men were enjoying themselves. This match is what they had dreamed about when they first became wrestlers.

Mil and Baker traded maneuvers, pitting their best moves against each other. One would earn an advantage, only to be countered by the other. It was a battle between equals.

The expression on Baker's face was almost holy. He was living in a world he never thought he could enter. His every move delighted him. Each success transported him to new heights. The crowd was cheering him. They knew this was one of the great matches of all time.

It was fitting that the match



The Mascaras-Baker match proved to be a classic scientific encounter. Mascaras locks up Baker (above). The two prove even in a test of strength (below).

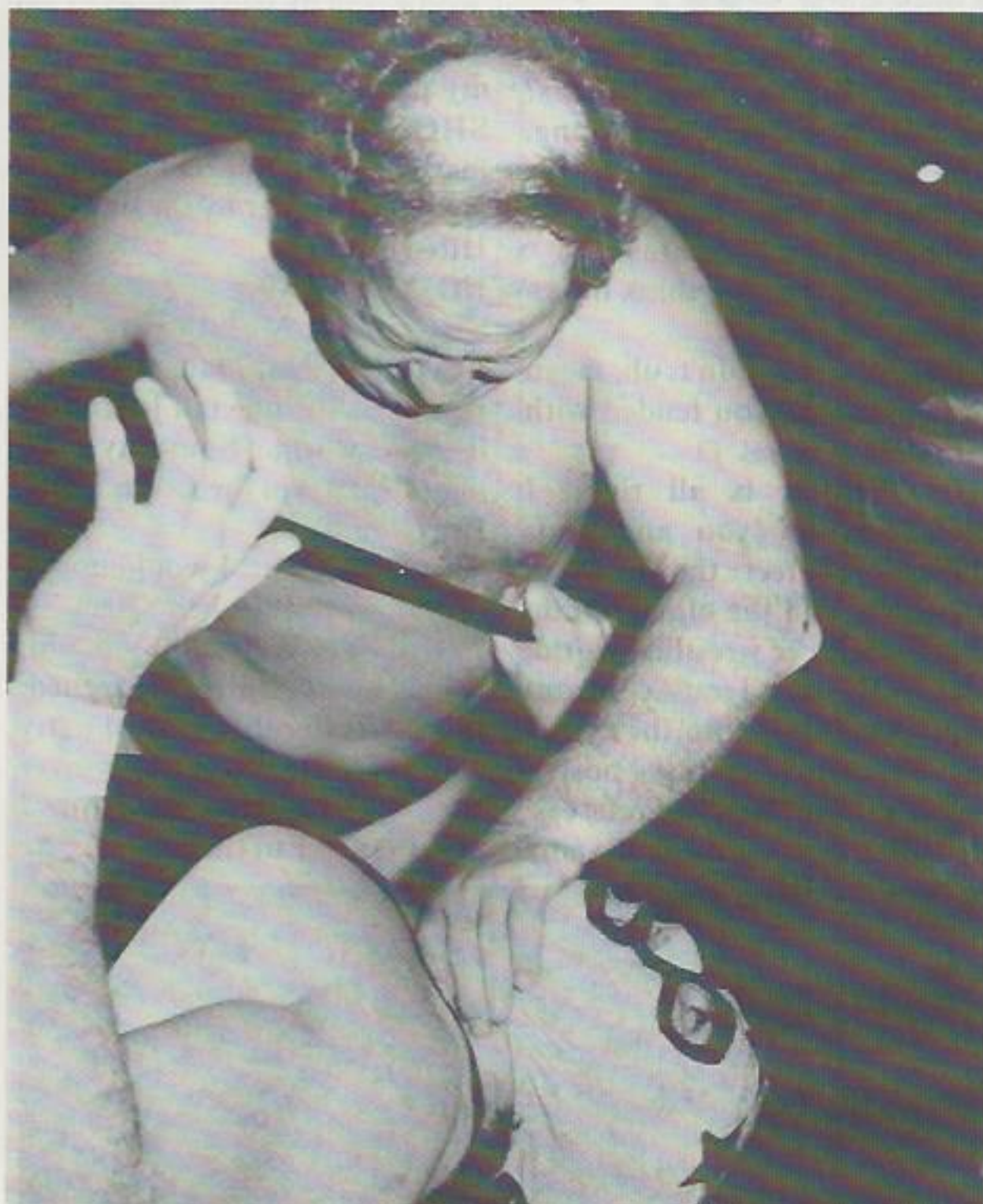


should end in a draw. The time limit expired, though both men appeared as if they could continue forever. As they were leaving the ring, Mil said to Baker, "You're one of the great ones."

Three nights later, Baker was breaking every rule, torturing his opponent, being as cruel as possible. Having proved something to himself, he now went back to conquering at all costs. He probably will never wrestle scientifically again. We should be grateful he shared his greatness with us once. □

GENE ANDERSON

(Continued from Page 41)



Anderson used to expect these tactics from Masked Superstar. But Superstar is now through with Anderson and all he stands for.

For quite some time, Anderson tried to reshape his champions into a mirror image of his own style. Quite understandably, they resisted. Then they committed an even worse offense: they got confused. After a while, Snuka and Stevens weren't entirely certain whose style they preferred. They needed Anderson's guidance, which is the sort of puppeteer relationship he wished. But creating dependent wrestlers requires constant attention, which Anderson's ambitions wouldn't permit. He was too busy trying to

destroy his brother Lars than to attend to his tag team champions. And that's when they lost their titles.

Thus Gene Anderson was always his own worst enemy. He envisioned himself ruling all of wrestling, a possibility at one time. But such conjecture is strewn, as always, with ifs. If Anderson hadn't alienated Superstar. If Anderson hadn't ordered the attack on Youngblood. If Anderson hadn't allowed Arab to be distracted. If Anderson hadn't tried to remold Snuka and Stevens. If Anderson weren't consumed with hate for his brother.

All ifs lead to one conclusion: The Empire of Gene Anderson has finally fallen. ☐

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PRESS CONFERENCE

(Continued from Page 25)

any more. I had to fight back.

APTER: So you went to Texas?

KOLOFF: Not for very long. The mediocre pigs in Texas soon bored me.

APTER: Like Mascaras?

KOLOFF: Ah, you think he is a mediocre pig, too.

APTER: Oh, I didn't, uh, mean that, just that you feuded with him and . . .

KOLOFF: It is all right. I already know you and your flunkies protect the likes of Mascaras and the other vermin in the scientific wrestling world. I know the odds I must confront every time I get into the ring. I must face hostile foes, hostile crowds, and hostile referees. But I can surmount any

obstacles the pigs place in my path.

SHOCKET: Sir, you recently faced further treachery from a tag team partner by the name of Hussein Arab.

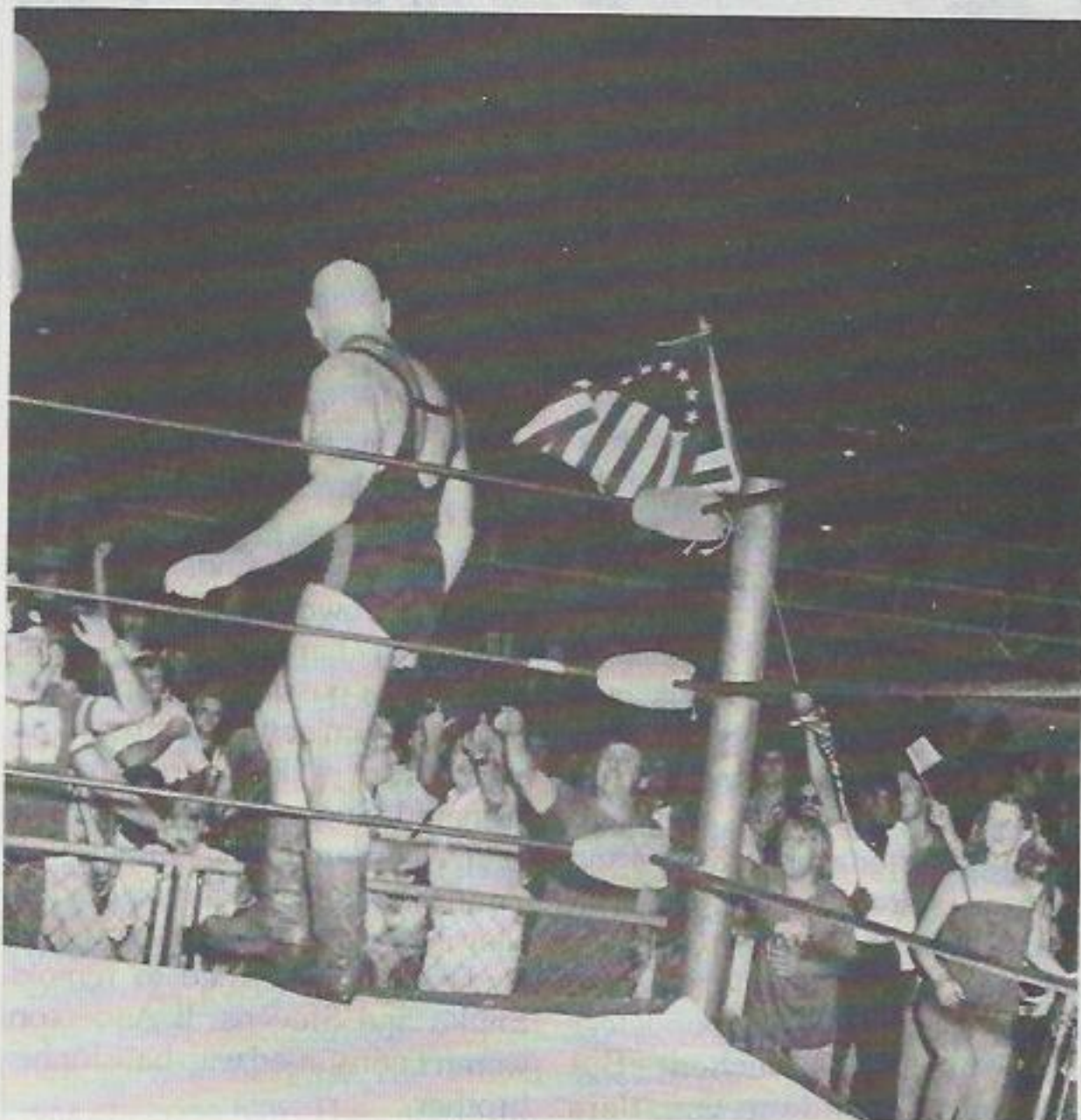
KOLOFF: Lying dog.

SHOCKET: Me?

KOLOFF: No, Dan, we know you to be the one fair journalist in the world. Someday you might even win the Lenin Peace Prize.

SHOCKET: Sir, I would honor it on my trophy shelf.

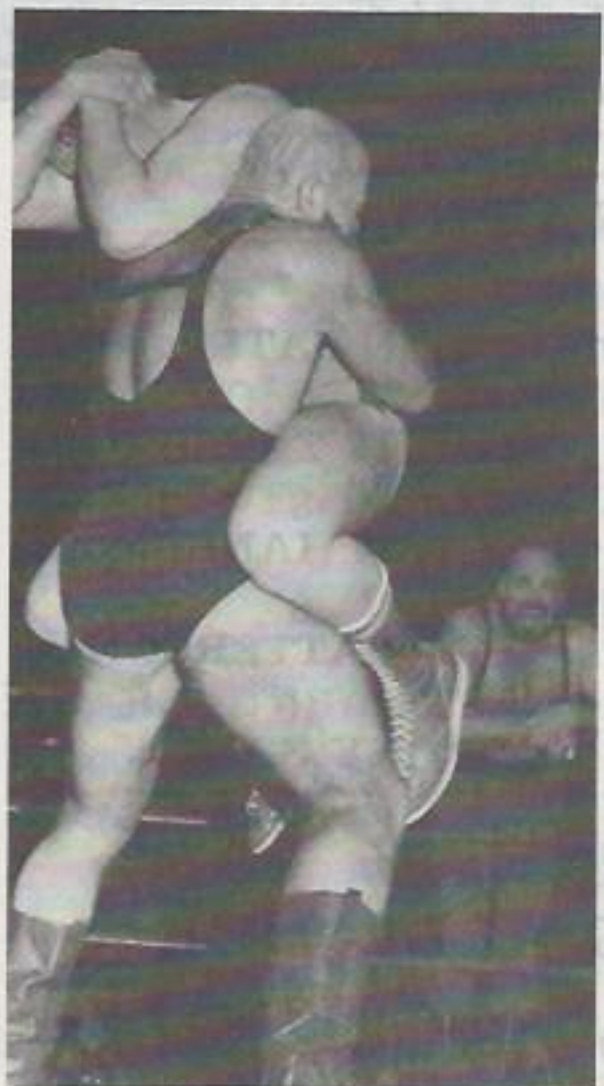
KOLOFF: Well you should. But as far as Arab is concerned, this is yet another case of petty jealousy. He was furious over the justifiable attention I received. Furthermore, he



Ivan Koloff will never be among the most popular wrestlers in the United States. Across the nation, fans show their hate for the Russian rulebreaker. Koloff, in turn, takes it out on his hapless opponent.

insisted on shooting off his ignorant vile mouth on television instead of permitting me to speak when all know how articulate I am. I cannot trust Hussein Arab. I do not think I can trust anyone anymore.

APTER: Did you ever think it might be you who shouldn't be trusted?



The Russian Bear squeezes the wind out of Lars Anderson. Koloff is considered to be among the most powerful men in sports.

KOLOFF: Swinish, flea-bitten mongoose from the Siberian wilds.

APTER: Oh, sir, I didn't . . .

KOLOFF: My integrity is beyond reproach. I treat all who measure up to my standards with equal fairness. I would never take advantage of an inferior creature unless they, in their colossal ignorance, attack me first. I resent such inferences from your filthy, disgusting lips and wish nothing further to do with your magazine. If I cannot be treated fairly, I will not speak to the press. That is all I have to say. ☐

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